RASPUTIN: PROPHET LIBERTINE, PLOTTER

By T. VOGEL-JÖRGENSEN.

Translated by W. F. Harvey.

Second Impression. *Cloth, 3s. 6d. net.*

Our interest in Rasputin must increase in direct proportion to our knowledge of this sinister personage who, little by little, from humble, even criminal beginnings, gathered into his hands all the threads of power in the Russian Church and State, and, himself a violent Reactionary, was unconsciously one of the main factors in precipitating the downfall of the Romanov Dynasty. In this book Mr. T. Vogel-Jörgensen has collected from all authentic sources available the salient features of Rasputin's career, from his boyhood down to his assassination. In Denmark the book has already run into eight editions.

T. Fisher Unwin Ltd. London.



SHOOTING-PARTY AT SEELOWITZ, MORAVIA, 1904.

Left to right (standing)—
Count Ceschi a Santa Croce (A.D.C. to the Archduke). Count St. Quentin (Master of the Household). Prince Emmanuel Salm (son-in-law of the Archduke). Prince Schwarzenberg. Prince Charles Croy (brother of the Archduchess). Duke of Teck. Archduke Frederick. Archduchess Henrietta.
(Sitting)—
Countess Leutrum. Count Mittrowsky. Countess Felicie d'Orsay. Count Michael Esterházy. Duchess of Teck. Princess Schwarzenberg. Princess Salm (daughter of the Archduke). Countess Antoinette Esterházy.

COURT & DIPLOMACY IN AUSTRIA AND GERMANY

WHAT I KNOW

By COUNTESS OLGA LEUTRUM

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

T. FISHER UNWIN LTD.
LONDON: ADELPHI TERRACE

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TO

EVERY RIGHT-MINDED,

DECENTLY FEELING RUSSIAN

AS AN ENCOURAGEMENT, TO EVERY

MISLED RUSSIAN FOR ENLIGHTENMENT,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

O. L.

PREFACE

SILENCE may sometimes be both a crime and a tacit lie. If you see those you love best on earth approaching a precipice, because they are temporarily blind, you are a criminal if you do not try to stop them.

My country, Russia, my nearest and dearest, partly blinded by her deceitful enemies, is hovering on the brink of a precipice.

My hand is weak, yet it must be extended. My silence must cease, lest it become criminal. I must cry out and warn you, even I, far more than another. I am in a position to do so, for I was able to weigh the scales, and can tell all those (the more the better) who have ears to hear, that in this war Right and Wrong are more clearly defined than in any previous one. Not for nothing have the Central Powers been condemned almost unanimously as by a plebiscite of all nations, and condemned rightly. My hand will not tremble

nor my heart quail in view of the task, for I have been given strength to tell the truth and nothing but the truth—because I *know*.

I will explain why I have seen both sides of the shield as shortly as possible. I am a child of mixed parentage: my father was Hungarian and my mother Russian. I have seen the political face (as it were, genuine home-face) of both lands—Russia and Austria-Hungary. Having been in Germany when the war broke out, I have also seen the vile face of Austria's present boss. I saw that too, unmasked, horrible and brutal. But more of that later. My father was in the diplomatic service, and I grew up in an atmosphere saturated with international politics. From childhood I was used to hear wise men of many nations talk of subjects of world interest. My father was, what would be termed in the parlance of to-day, a pro-German, a pretty rare specimen, I can tell you, in the case of a Hungarian before the war. My mother, Olga Lobanov, was born and brought up in Paris, and represented the best type of a pure Russian personality, with Anglo-French culture grafted upon it. She may be said to have personified the

"entente" of to-day. My parents' marriage was not a happy one, and it was only owing to my mother's tact and personal dignity that a decent "façade" was maintained. I was integrally *her* daughter, and though I hope I was a dutiful daughter to my father (though at the cost of great personal sacrifice) there was a lack of sympathy in our relations. About my none too happy childhood no more need be said.

At eighteen I was "brought out" in Vienna and Budapest. I felt an alien, as my mother had felt before me. The carefully built up patriotism, implanted in the schoolroom, crumbled before the actual facts, when I saw the country and observed the habits of the people. Nominally I belonged to that people, in reality I never did. Therefore my eyes and ears were open and I could freely compare my father's and my mother's countries. In the latter we used to pass many happy months in summer, in my mother's family. And *there* I *did* feel at home.

At nineteen, my father being at the time Austro-Hungarian minister at The Hague, I saw something of the first Peace Conference. A most interesting time, during which I

laid up many impressions, that have been dormant, but that I can read clearly now, in the lurid light of the world-war. Three years later I lost my adored mother, all I held dear on earth, and after eighteen months of misery that almost drove me insane, my father got rid of his none too well-loved daughter by placing me as lady-in-waiting to Archduchess Isabelle, the wife of Archduke Frederick of Austria, who was, as long as the late Emperor lived, commander of the Austrian forces.

Thus situated I could make an exhaustive study of "Austria mendax." By that time its fear and dislike of Russia was very apparent, as you will see. From 1903 to 1906 I was there, and then my father died suddenly. In 1906 I left court to be able to take care of my only sister. My evil star made me meet and marry Count Leutrum in that year. I was separated from him in 1913, and he drank himself to death two months before the war broke out, leaving me thus entirely free. I lived in Munich for a year, for the sake of some very kind relations of my husband's who had sided entirely with me after he had made several attempts on my life. That is

how I came to be in Germany when the war broke out.

This is all I need say of my personality, to explain how I came to see both sides of the war-question.

This book is specially written for Russia, because of all the Allies she most needs enlightenment as to the true and intimate causes of this war and the long, treacherous preparations of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Young Revolutionary Russia has made an almost unavoidable mistake: she threw the good with the bad overboard in getting rid of her late form of government. Thus she lost contact with all the previous information necessary in order to form a right estimate of this war and of its importance. It is a pardonable mistake, but it would be unpardonable for one who knows better not to try to tell them the truth. I should be a bad patriot indeed were I not to raise my voice in this case.

I am bold enough to claim one merit for my book: I have personally lived through, seen, and heard what I am going to put down in the following pages. I try to be as impartial and as just as it is humanly possible to be.

As I said before, my book is dedicated to Russia, for she most *needs* it.

But I hope it may deserve a kindly welcome in all the countries allied in this Holy War, united under the motto of "Right against Might." For it *is* indeed a Holy War against the brutality and the insane militarism in which the Central Powers kept the world for forty years.

I think I need say very little more in this my introduction of my person and my book to the public. By this they will see how I came to be so well acquainted with *both* sides of the shield.

As I cannot serve in the crusade with the sword, I put my pen at its disposal. Nor do I wish to hide behind the curtain of anonymity. I prefer to sign in full.

COUNTESS OLGA LEUTRUM,
née OKOLICZÁNYI OF OKOLICSNA.

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WHAT I KNOW

CHAPTER I

MY DÉBUT IN AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

I HAD first been to a few soirées in Vienna, before I was brought to Pest, and having had some previous experience of the world at informal receptions at home or at the houses of my parents' friends, I had a standard of comparison ready, and asked my mother "why people seemed so hostile in Vienna?" "Have you already noticed it?" replied mamma.

"I am at a loss," I went on, "because they seem to lack the most elementary notions of politeness and hospitality."

"Ah!" came again from my mother. "Listen! Answer me honestly, have I *ever* prejudiced you in *any* way about your father's country?"

I was astonished at the question, for indeed she had done nothing of the kind, by word or by deed. So far, in fact, that she had never taught me Russian, but conscientiously led my education so as to fit me, as far as she could, for the country officially mine. I said so. Then I added that I only could feel indistinctly that I did not seem to *belong* here. My mother's face became sad. "I did my best," she said, "but I suppose it can't be helped. You see, my poor child, your father is Hungarian, and I am Russian, both are equally feared and hated here. I had many bitter experiences myself. The Austrian aristocracy *is* ill-bred, with the exception of a few, like the Metternichs, who are cosmopolitans. The rest marry and intermarry, and re-intermarry, until they become like one large and stupid family, who think there is no world outside of them. I tell you this, not to put you up against them, but to explain. I had been all over the world before I came here, and I never saw anything like it. I will tell you a story which would be impossible anywhere else. I came here when I was newly married, and a Viennese, a so-called 'great lady,' said within my hear-

ing, just after I had been introduced to her, 'that she really didn't know what the world was coming to, if the daughters of Asiatic satraps were going to marry into civilized countries.' I faced her, and remarked very coolly: 'that, at all events, Asiatic satraps were not civilized *beyond* the common laws of politeness and hospitality, and (would the world believe it?) were actually proud of this fact!'

"I got a laugh at the lady's expense, and a reputation for being able to take care of myself. People were more careful in sharpening their dull wits at my expense after this."

I may remark that my mother rejoiced in a world-wide popularity, both for her beauty, her charm, and her intelligence. She was kindliness itself too, unless one offered gratuitous insults to her nationality, as in the above case, and then she was quite able to put "the fear of the Lord" into people. All this is not of deep interest, perhaps. It only goes to show that Russia and the Russians are considered as *far* beneath the famous "Kultur" which has shown such glorious results in the violation of Belgium, the martyrization of Poland and Serbia, jointly executed by Austria and Germany.

As regards Austria-Hungary, let it be remembered that it is a land of much-mixed races, the *greater* part of which are Slavs. If the at present reigning element, which is German, were suppressed, with its appalling snobbery and more than Chinese ancestor-worship, I myself could find much to like, even much to remind me of home, in the *people*. But the upper classes are the ruin of the land, from the reigning house to the last aping parvenu.

Can you fancy a country where no talent, no genius even, can avail you to get recognition? Unless you have sixteen quarterings you are beyond the pale, and even if you have them, but are of alien blood, partly or wholly, anathema upon you!

I happened to mention Tolstoy once, and expressed my admiration for him. You will never guess upon what grounds his greatness was finally conceded by a few scions of Austrian nobility: "Ah, but that is different, *he was a count!*" Do not think that it is bitterness in me to speak as I do. I *had* the required quarterings; I even made a position for myself eventually, by the only possible method there—that of being *even* more



rude than they were. But I *was* an alien, and I took a certain pride in being different. I was also blessed by a sense of humour, so that I got a lot of quiet fun out of my position of onlooker! And I *saw* the game, I promise you.

I do not consider that diplomats are at all in a good position to judge—not from the inside. They are considered officially nominated spies, and compromising conversations stop at their approach. They get their meed of flattery, their meed of blame, and it is the merest chance if they perceive a corner of the national soul.

I can give you a concrete example—that of my great uncle (brother of mamma's father), Alexis Lobanov, who was our ambassador at Vienna for many a long year, and who died twenty years ago under the fond illusion that Austria was well-disposed towards us. He was a shrewd and clever man, yet was completely hoodwinked. And why? For a single man he was well off, and he received much and charmingly. Show me the society that cannot be fed into temporary good humour! On the other hand, his age and official position brought him into contact

with the older elements, who still remembered the Hungarian Revolution and Russia's rôle in saving the Habsburg throne. These retained some sort of gratitude, unwilling perhaps, but still faintly present, even in later days—my days. We will come to that presently. As for the young men in the diplomatic service, they no doubt enjoyed the "life in Vienna." I wish them to remember that loose women are a purchasable commodity all the world over, and that the good fellowship built upon the foundation of "Wine and women" is also international—and worthless. No one will make me believe that a champagne supper is the proper place to study racial sympathies or differences. Besides, if the saying "*In vino veritas*" be true, it is even truer, it seems to me, that it induces a certain equality and a feeling of superficial liking—for him who pays. And be assured it was *we* who paid, *le cœur sur la main* as we are—and paid in more ways than one.

A tragic figure in contrast to all this rises before my mind's eye. A beautiful Russian, married into one of the greatest families in Austria. People say she was merry—once! I can scarcely credit it now. At thirty

her hair was grey, and a haunting sadness never left her face. I know her; she is always uncommunicative and dignified. She has tried her best. She had a hell of a life in her husband's family, and I myself heard her vilely abused, whilst apparently the only evidence against her was that *she was a Russian.*

The other instance was that of an equally beautiful Italian. Mercifully she died. If the hatred against us was deep-rooted and silent, that of Italy, officially accounted an ally, but *always* treated as an enemy, was very blatant and offensive indeed. Yet to-day Austria clamours about Italy's "treason." It is merely laughable!

Now I come to a strange part of my first impressions.

I must begin with a few lines of history. In 1848, exasperated by the atrocious treatment of her by Austria, Hungary rose as one man. The revolution was successful, and the treacherous House of Habsburg was almost swept off by it. Almost! What bitter regret must fill the heart of every true Russian to-day that the Emperor Nicholas I, through

dynastical prejudice, was induced to help the "young Emperor, Francis Joseph."

It was a kinsman of mine, my great-grandfather, Field-Marshal Paskévitsch, who had the chief rôle to play. Whilst obeying the Tsar's command, he made no secret of his private opinion, either before his Imperial master or otherwise.

He said he disliked his task, because he was *sure* it would only once more bring out Austria's historical thanklessness, directing it, sooner or later, *against* us. He said Austria was rotten, and the only live sapling, sprung from a decayed tree, was the rebellious Hungary he was asked to fight. It is also a matter of history that he tried to make the best terms for the foes he had beaten, but considered gallant. It was none of *his* fault that Emperor Francis Joseph broke his solemn Imperial word of honour concerning the safety of the rebellious generals. This word had been given to Paskévitsch, yet he had scarcely passed the frontier when the Emperor gave orders to have them all *hanged!* Think of the horror of it—*hanged!* It should be a dread warning to all those who imagine to-day to be able to come to honourable, acceptable

terms with Austria. Be warned in time, by the atrocious gallows of Világos, erected in defiance of a solemnly passed Imperial word. Believe me, now as of yore, high-sounding promises are easily given by the House of Habsburg—and as easily broken.

I heard this story recounted on both sides. My mother told it me often, as a sort of family history, dwelling upon the indignation of her grandfather, who never quite forgave the Emperor of Austria this mean act.

On the other side it was told us, strangely enough, by the chief leader of the rebels, General Görgey himself. He was at that time in Rome, where he passed the winters of his exile, whilst my father was attached to the "Black Embassy."

I was a small girl of nine, but I still remember the scene as if it were to-day—the extraordinarily handsome white-haired General bending low over my mother's hand and saying: "Madam, you must accept an old soldier's thanks in place of your grandfather; had it not been for him this head would have been in a felon's noose, and my heart would first have broken under the shame and the dishonour of such a death."

He then told us a thing that is perhaps not generally known, but can do no harm now, if published, namely, that, considering General Görgey was the ringleader, my great-grandfather feared to trust to the mercy of the Austrians, and privately helped him to escape. I shall never forget the pride that filled me when Görgey said: "We never surrendered to the Austrians, *never!* but to Paskévitsch there was no shame in surrendering, for he was strong and great enough to be merciful."

One strange impression I spoke about can be summarized in the following words: though it was Hungary the Russians had fought against and beaten, my mother and I experienced far less unkindness there than in Austria, though we were of the very blood of the man who had vanquished them. It must be that some popular sense of justice brought back the hatred to roost where it really belonged—to Austria.

And the Hungarians' friendliness to us need not be accounted for by my father's being of their race. Ambition and foresight made my paternal grandfather stick to the Imperial cause, and ambition for his career made my father quite exaggeratedly

black and yellow ("*Schwarzgelb*," the contemptuous appellation in Hungary for those who pinned their faith to the Imperial colours).

And I assure you, up to the war, this was no Open Sesame to favour; indeed, rather a tacit traitor's badge in the eyes of Hungary. My mother possessed to a great degree that democracy of soul so common among the Russians. Her sympathies were *not* with kings and princes generally, though of course making exceptions for special persons among them. Phrases like this: "He (or she) is quite nice, *in spite* of being a Highness," I constantly heard from her. No wonder, then, that we made our friends in Budapest largely among the so-called "Opposition party"—a party more or less constantly "*en fronde*" with Vienna, but by far the more sympathetic faction. My father was in the queer position of having an "inherited friendship," if I may use the expression, with the family of their accepted leaders, the Andrassys. In his youth he had been private secretary to their eminent father, who, by the way, also died a disappointed, heart-broken man, because he witnessed his life-work—the better understanding between the two halves of the Mon-

archy—ruined by the faithlessness of Austria. Politically, then, my father was their enemy, fighting them tooth and nail, and many strange discussions took place. The Opposition's unavowed aim, up to the war, was liberation from Austria. My father of course considered this damnation and ruin.

I wonder what he would say now? One thing is certain, that never were there two countries more absurdly mated. Hungary, if proud, vain, and excitable, is also, in the main, frank, chivalrous, and generous. Predestined to be *le dindon de la farce*, she fought Austria's wars, paid her debts, was exploited and fooled by her always—in the past, the present, and in the future—how long?

Take three episodes out of her history: for centuries she was a rampart against the Turks—to what end? Her own glory perhaps, for certainly that was all the thanks she got. The famous time when Maria Theresa felt shaken upon her throne and appealed, with a dramatic talent that is undeniable, to Hungary! what did Hungary ever get for it? Oh, I forget! Numbers of people were created counts, of course!

Then lastly, in '66, when the only good

general the Austrian army had was sacrificed, in order that the blame should not fall upon a member of the House of Habsburg. I mean General Benedek, who was the only one who could perhaps have saved the country from the German claw.

And we? What did *we* get for our helping hand? Exactly what Hungary got: craven fear, hate, contempt, abuse, treachery. The only sign of respect in both cases lies in the first-mentioned result—fear.

It is not for nothing that I draw this lengthy simile. Read these signs in Russia, you dreamers of dreams of peace, and accept them as a *mene tekel.* For in me you have a witness who saw things from the inside—saw everything from close by!

When the war broke out, I had one moment of hope. Hungary in its blindness let the liberating minute pass.

CHAPTER II

THE PEACE CONFERENCE, THE HAGUE, 1899

YOUNG Russia, you talk much of Liberty! Do you only mean liberty for certain factions, or liberty for all? I hope you are large-minded enough to mean the latter. Not to want to hear the truth argues weakness—and I do not believe you are weak.

I *need* liberty for what I am going to say to you, because I must talk of one you have now dethroned, and whose fate should be another perpetual *mene tekel* to you, to *all* of you as a nation.

From the bottom of my heart devoted to you, I believe you to be full of sense, and yet full of idealism, more so than any other nation in the world. And fundamentally your ideals are larger, better, saner, with more of beauty and courage in them than those of

other nations. And yet! and yet! *will* you ever rise to the eminence that all those who love you with a deep and abiding love desire for you?

Ah, Russia! Your fate is interwoven with every fibre of my being; every minute of my life is but hope and prayer for you! Do not disappoint me, and the hundreds of thousands like me!

You talk, too, of Socialism and a golden era to arise from it. Do any of you, who talk about it, remember the God-made-man Who first taught you the original elements of this doctrine—Christ?

And has any one of you ever noticed the fundamental difference between the Divine application of the theory and its human counterpart? And I talk to believer and unbeliever alike, for the pure philosophy of the Christian doctrine has been accepted even by unbelievers, and the Divine idea, the only one that *can*, if practically executed, lead you to a golden era of peace and goodwill, talks *always of giving*. *Your* talk is but of *taking*. Understand me well. I would talk differently to a people less idealistic; but my speech is for you, for Russians. Can you not try to

grasp that unless you too are eternally *willing* to *give*, you will achieve nothing? If each of you is not willing to die and suffer for all, and all are not willing to die and suffer for one of you—if you do not achieve a selfless unity—you will achieve but "noise and nothingness"; you will go the way of discord, disintegration, and death. Yes, death—moral, spiritual, and physical. Cannot you summon enough greatness to lay aside personal ambition, and instead of being separate, miserably twinkling tiny stars, unite your forces to become rays of light, linked together into one great sun, useful and powerful, shedding glory and splendour and happiness? I propose you a new device, to be inscribed in your hearts and upon your banners—the device of a new power for good and a new nation. It should be: "One for all, and all for one." Listen to me! The man you dethroned *had* high ideals. Was not his the hope of bidding for arbitration, so as to secure peace upon earth? Surely no ideal can be higher! At present it is your own also. Both you and he forgot the saying of Christ: "For unto thee I bring not peace, but the sword." And again I address myself to

believers and unbelievers alike—have any of you ever tried to understand the *inner* meaning of this saying?

The inner meaning is: that if you stand for a cause that is right, you must remain watchful and armed, and be ready at any moment to lay down your life for it. Yea, even sacrifice the life of your brother, if he attacks what is holy and right. Christ brought a sword—for Truth *is* a sword—to cleave lies and shams in twain. If, therefore, your cause is the cause of Truth versus a lie you *must* fight. If your brother attacks *you* only, you are free to let him kill you, if you so choose, because you are only an individual, a personal unit, and you were given free will. But if he attacks your wife, your children, your family, you *must* fight, and, if necessary, kill him, *because he attacks what is holy,* in every nation, in every civilization, even in the basest, the least developed; he desecrates, in attacking it, the hearth, the family.

In a larger sense, every nation is as a family, and every man, worthy of the name, was given his family to defend.

Will you, Russians, whom just now I called idealists, lay down the sword of Truth? *You*

before whose collective and individual courage the world has bowed until now, as before a strange virtue your worst enemy could not dispute? Will *you*, of all nations, stand to be pilloried, and written down henceforward as traitors and cowards? *Never!* But if——

Then I pray God be merciful to me, and let me die in that hour.

Mene, mene, tekel! The Emperor was an idealist, yet you dethroned him. And why? Because in his soul there was no unity, no force, no will! Because the sacred flame burnt unsteadily and wavered. Will you all waver too? Won't you be able to find the collective strength of *will* that must keep you seated upon a throne among the other nations, strong, loyal, and honoured? Will you, too, shilly-shally until it is too late, until the nations rise against you, calling you weaklings, and thus dethrone you, and precipitate you into the outer darkness? For remember this, at the present moment you are risking your entire future! *You* are the men whom unborn generations will have reason either to bless or to curse, even hundreds of years hence. Don't forget it; never lose sight of your tremendous responsibility!

Can you not open your eyes and see that a miracle has happened? Almost the entire world has forgotten its small immediate interests to fight a common enemy—to cut out a cancerous, poisonous growth. And to the most unbelieving I would say: Look at America! Do you think a nation so free from constraint, so level-headed, and so eminently pacific, would ever have gone to war were it not a dire necessity, a thing unavoidable, if one would keep high the standard of national honour? And what is a nation without its honour? All of you have surely met in your life an individual person who had lost that precious intangible thing!

Did you think that existence enviable?—shunned, disliked, a moral leper! Well, then, shudder, every one of you, at the thought of preparing such a future for a whole nation, innocent and guilty alike—of preparing such a future for *your children.* Yet, trying to be just, I can see your objection: *Is* our cause the just one? And because I *know* it is, I will answer you out of my knowledge; out of the experience of one who has seen both sides of the question; because she saw one of the nations she belonged to pre-

pare the ambush of death for the other. Heard it with her own ears, saw it with her own eyes. And when the atrocious result became visible, when this poor earth was made to burn and bleed, by the crime of two powerful nations, joined in the cause of evil —then, even I, a woman, weak of health, poor, and alone, found strength to renounce the side of evil for the side of good. And I pray now I may be given the pen as a sword, to fight for Right against Might: to raise the banner of Truth, and wave it on high for all to see!

Listen! In 1899 the man whom you dethroned was one of the most powerful rulers on earth. So that his motive for proposing an international conference to establish the possibility of peace by arbitration—*this* at least cannot be put down to him as weakness.

And all the other rulers said to him: "Hail, Prince, for thy thought is good." All were honest in their greeting but two, who were secretly sharpening their knife—for murder. Upon the face of these two the smile of welcome was a sneer, and in their hearts dwelt blackness. And, though I was young, I heard and I saw. This is how it happened.



OLGA OKOLICZÁNYI, *née* PRINCESS LOBANOFF-ROSTOWSKY.

Picture to yourself a lovely sleepy little town, all of a sudden inundated by the intellectual forces of the whole world. It was The Hague in May 1899.

Politicians, *savants*, soldiers, sailors, and writers, in fact every brilliant brain the world over, had been sent by their government (or came of their free will, out of curiosity and interest) to help on the cause of peace. It was an extraordinary event indeed! And what wonder that the house of a beautiful, charming, and intelligent woman, with an international reputation for these qualities, should become the social centre, where all these people loved to gather, and where they talked, so to say, with their visors down. This woman was my mother.

Her hospitality, her delightful, sparkling conversation, and her discretion, marked her out for this position—and by common consent it was hers. By blood and by ineradicable sympathy she was, and had always remained, a Russian. By marriage she was the wife of the Austro-Hungarian Minister at The Hague. I was her modest aide-de-camp and confidant, then as always, and what I am going to report was either said within my hearing or told me afterwards by her.

The President, both by seniority and because his country had taken the initiative, was Baron de Staal, at the time Russian Ambassador at London. How can I best describe this man, with the physique of a preternaturally clever, yet venerable, orang-outang? With eyes that took in everything; with a distinction and a force of personality all his own. Next to the effect of a vivid and, so to say, vibrating intelligence that Baron de Staal invariably produced, he gave the impression of entire straightforwardness and honesty.

This old man of near eighty was young in his enthusiasm and hopefulness—and, later on, in his indignation too. The idea he was asked to represent was great, and the devotion he placed at its service was worthy of it. But all too soon his hopefulness made way to indignation. Let me repeat here a conversation that took place in my mother's salon one day, when by chance we were quite alone with him.

"Cela ne marche pas, cela ne marche pas! On nous met des bâtons dans les roues, à chaque instant! L'Allemagne joue à cartes fermées, alors que les nôtres sont étalées sur la table.

Que veulent-ils ? Ils s'esquivent, ils se dérobent, et l'Autriche de même."

"Pardon, Olga Michaïlovna, j'oublie toujours que cela pourrait vous froisser, j'oublie que vous n'êtes plus Russe."

"Je serai toujours Russe, mon ami; on ne change pas son cœur à volonté—mais croyez-vous donc à des sentiments hostiles de la part de l'Allemagne, à ces idées de Paix ?"

"Je vous ai déjà dit qu'ils se dérobent. S'ils étaient franchement hostiles je crois que je serais moins effrayé. Vous verrez que nous serons tous prêts à signer les conventions—la France, l'Angleterre, l'Italie, l'Amérique, l'Espagne ; nous autres, les petits pays aussi, très naturellement. Ceux-là n'ont qu'à gagner, si leurs grands voisins se tiennent tranquilles."

"Et voilà, et voilà encore : l'Allemagne et l'Autriche ne signeront, à mon avis, *jamais !* Avec cela eux aussi se proclament champions de la Paix—de la Paix armée jusqu'aux dents, naturellement ! Et nous devrons continuer à nous ruiner en armements, car cependant on ne peut pas être bête au point de désarmer tous, si eux ne désarment point. Des fois ils s'imaginent que nous serions assez sérieux pour le faire. Voyez vous un peu: Ils nous encouragent même

de désarmer, seulement quand on leur dit: Et vous, messieurs? Ils *disent* que *c'est tout à fait autre chose!* Je vous demande un peu! Je connais Münster de longue date, il est même mon ami, personnellement, mais ni officiellement ni en sa qualité d'ami, il n'y a rien à en tirer! Je l'ai attaqué de face un jour, et il m'a répondu le plus évasivement possible: 'Que l'Allemagne certes avait tout intérêt à maintenir les bases de la politique Bismarckienne, amitié avec la Russie, alliance avec l'Autriche et l'Italie: il ne croyait pas que l'on dénierait de ces principes,' etc. L'Empereur Guillaume II est un souverain pacifique,' etc., encore. 'Et le désarmement partiel?' lui demandai-je. 'Une Utopie. Et puis l'Autriche ne voudra jamais, elle se compose de nationalités trop différentes, une armée commune est nécessaire pour amalgamer, pour fondre tous ces éléments divers.' Possible, mais pourquoi est-ce que Welsersheimb, qui n'est pas un aigle, m'explique que c'est *l'Allemagne* qui a besoin d'une armée pour défendre et maintenir ses colonies contre l'Angleterre, et se garer contre l'agression de la France? C'est fou, que voulez-vous, mais c'est ainsi qu'ils se renvoient la balle —et c'est ainsi que nous allons droit à un fiasco.

" Si encore la Russie prenait pour prétexte, pour avoir une forte armée, que nous avons après tout l'Asie entière à nos portes, cela aurait encore quelque sens commun. L'Asie est toujours un facteur inconnu, et le restera probablement longtemps encore. Mais eux ? *Nous* ne sommes certes pas agressifs et n'avons aucune querelle à chercher en Europe, ni ailleurs, si on nous laisse tranquilles. Nous avons, plus ou moins, toujours été un ' bon Géant ' et le serons toujours."

" Mais croyez-vous à la possibilité, même éloignée, que d'autres s'attaquent à nous ? " here interpolated Mamma. " L'Angleterre ne nous aime pas, mais . . ."

" L'Angleterre, Olga Michaïlovna ! Vous retardez de vingt ans au moins ! L'Angleterre est riche, puissante, elle peut de ne pas nous aimer d'un tendre amour, mais si nous désarmons de bonne foi, elle désarmera tout aussi honnêtement, une fois la question des Boers réglée. Aussi bien, je veux croire que les Anglais soient aveugles, mais jamais ils ne seront *assez* aveugles pour vouloir sérieusement affaiblir le brise-lame que nous sommes, contre l'Asie. Elle tient trop à ses Indes. L'avenir nous verra peut-être Alliés—ennemis, je n'y crois pas ! "

"Alors?" queried my mother.

"Alors, alors, j'ai très peur quand-même depuis cette conférence." [1]

[1] "It won't do! it won't do! they put obstacles before us at every step! Germany is playing with hidden cards, while ours are spread on the table. What do they want? They are lying low, and playing an underhand game: and so is Austria."

"I beg your pardon, Olga Michailovna; I always forget that you may be hurt by this sort of thing; I forget you are no longer a Russian."

"I shall always be a Russian, my friend: one's heart is not to be changed at will—but do you believe in a hostile attitude on Germany's part, in the midst of all these ideas of Peace?"

"I have already said they are playing an underhand game. If they were frankly hostile I think I should be less alarmed. You will see, we shall all be ready to sign the treaties—France, England, Italy, America, and Spain: and we ourselves, and the little countries too, naturally. These will be all the better off if their great neighbours keep quiet.

"There you are, and there again: Germany and Austria, to my thinking, will *never* sign. And for all that they too declare themselves champions of Peace—Peace armed to the teeth, of course! And we shall have to go on ruining ourselves over armaments, for after all we can't be so stupid as all to disarm if they do not. Sometimes they think we should be sufficiently in earnest to do it. You see how it is: they urge us to go even to the point of disarmament, but when you ask them: And what of yourselves, gentlemen? they say it is *quite another matter!* Did you ever hear of such a thing? I have known Münster for many years, he is even a personal friend of mine, but neither from his official nor his friendly relations with me can I drag

And then, as if a prophetic spirit seized him, he went on:

"Voici: l'Autriche veut s'étendre vers les Balkans, qu'elle compte englober tôt ou tard. L'Allemagne guigne notre Pologne et nos Provinces baltiques, et elle est jalouse des colonies anglaises, et de son expansion commerciale, à laquelle elle ambitionne de plus en plus de faire concurrence. Nous dormons

anything out of him! I attacked him openly one day, and he answered as evasively as possible 'that it was certainly entirely to Germany's interest to preserve the foundations of Bismarck's policy, that is to say, a friendship with Russia and an alliance with Austria and Italy: he did not think these principles would be forsaken, etc. Emperor William II was still a peace-loving sovereign, etc.' 'What you do think of partial disarmament?' I asked. 'A Utopia. Besides, Austria will never consent; she is made up of too many different nationalities, and a common army is necessary to her so as to amalgamate and mingle all these diverse elements.' Possibly, but why does Welsersheimb, who is no eagle, point out to me that it is *Germany* who needs an army to defend and maintain her colonies against England, and to protect herself against aggression on the part of France? It is wild, but what do you expect? For that is how they toss the ball to and fro—and that is how we are heading straight for disaster.

"Even if Russia chose as a pretext for keeping up a strong army the fact that after all we have the whole of Asia at our doors, there would at least be some sense in the plea. Asia is always an unknown quantity, and will probably

à poings fermés, l'Angleterre dort, la France ne crie qu'en rêve. L'Allemagne ferme seulement les yeux pour la forme; en vérité elle veille et elle s'arme. L'Autriche devient son esclave de plus en plus, et elle ne nous a jamais pardonné celle-là, de l'avoir sauvée en '48.

"Enfin j'ai une peur instinctive des commencements de siècles.

"L'enfant [that was myself] écarquille les yeux, et si je suis mauvais prophète, je lui permets

remain so for a long time yet. But what of them? *We* are certainly not aggressive and have no quarrel to pick in Europe, nor anywhere else, if we are left alone. We have always been more or less a 'good-natured giant' and shall continue so always."

"But do you believe in even the remote possibility that others will attack us?" here interpolated Mamma. "England does not like us, but . . ."

"England, Olga Michailovna! you are at least twenty years behind! England is rich and powerful; she very likely does not love us tenderly, but if we disarm in all good faith she will disarm quite as honestly, once the Boer question is settled. Besides, I am willing to believe that the English are blind, but they will never be *so* blind as seriously to wish to weaken the breakwater that we form against Asia. She sets too much store on her India. The future may find us allies—but enemies, no, I don't believe it!"

"And then?" queried my mother.

"Then, then, I am very much alarmed even since this conference."

de dire plus tard : ' Le vieux a radoté.' Moi je serai mort, mais je crains bien qu'elle ne voit encore éclater une guerre, la plus terrible que le monde n'a jamais vue. Avec les forces partagées comment ? Je n'en sais rien encore. Mais je suis *sûr*, *absolument sûr*, que le premier coup partira du côté allemand." [1]

How often I have remembered Baron de Staal's words ! " L'enfant qui écarquille les yeux" [2] is now a very sad and weary woman,

[1] " It is like this : Austria wants to spread out towards the Balkans, and counts on absorbing them sooner or later. Germany has an eye on our Poland and our Baltic Provinces, and is jealous of the English colonies, and of the expansion of English commerce, which she grows more and more ambitious to rival. We are sleeping with our fists clenched, England is asleep, and France is only crying out in her sleep. Germany is only keeping her eyes shut for form's sake ; in reality she is awake and arming herself. Austria is increasingly her slave, and we have never been forgiven for having saved her in 1848.

" And then I have an instinctive dread of the opening of a new century.

" The child [that was myself] is looking at me with astonished eyes, and if I am a bad prophet I give her leave to say later on, ' The old man was talking nonsense.' I shall be dead, but I am very much afraid she will live to see war declared, the most terrible war the world has ever seen. How will the forces be divided ? I cannot say at present. But I am *sure*, *absolutely sure*, that the first shot will be fired by Germany."

[2] The child with astonished eyes.

and begs pardon of his spirit for having, in childish optimism, believed then "que le vieux radotait." [1] You must not forget that I was barely nineteen.

My mother became very serious, and after Baron de Staal had left, I asked her what *she* thought about it. She replied:

"You know that whatever your father's political opinions may be, they are not anti-Russian. This conference for the establishment of arbitration has his entire approval. I have no reason whatever to doubt his good faith. Well, a few days ago he also told me that he could not understand the line of conduct prescribed by the governments in Austria and Germany. As you know, he is easily put out and moved to anger, and he was very angry indeed when he said to me: 'We might as well have refused to send representatives to this conference, for all the good we are doing. We are taking up an evasive, unworthy attitude, saying neither yea nor nay. With her usual discrimination Austria has sent one poor fool [meaning Welsersheimb] and one knave [Gaëtan de Mérey], who stop the honest men from doing

[1] That the old man was talking nonsense.

anything. As to Münster and the other Germans, I cannot make them out at all. They are long-winded and turn out compliments by the yard, but they might be fools or knaves (which I know them not to be), for all the good they do. And Professor Zorn makes all our heads reel with statistics that prove nothing and lead nowhere—for all the world as if he wanted to gain time.' "

Now, whatever my father's faults, he was honest in his political convictions, and being honest, unable to see through the deep game the others were playing. He put them down as being ungainly, clumsy, but could not go as far as suspecting their real reason. He himself was rather an anti-militarist. Having a physical defect (he was lame), he had never served, and certainly militarism under all its forms was a dead letter to him. On the other hand, he believed in a political and diplomatic regeneration of the world, of which he thought the idea of peace by arbitration was at least a fair beginning.

He was of the old school, in so far as the tradition of Bismarck went. He was frankly friendly towards Russia, but (nobody really knows why) he hated England, France, and

Italy. Considering that he was a most "contrary" man, perhaps the reason that my mother loved these countries was a sufficient cause. In his embarrassment, he expressed a sentiment that sounds prophetic *now*. "I cannot conceive the *object* of isolating ourselves! Even England, who is always grasping, always harbouring some after-thought, for her own aggrandizement—look at the Boer War—even she is quite willing (her present quarrel left out of the question) to submit to arbitration. Before this conference was started, I always feared it would be from the side of Albion our difficulties would arise. Yet she is as pleasant and as willing as any to help on this cause. But we—*we?* Utopia or not, arbitration would at least be a step in the right direction. But we seem to be blind to this fact." "For," he always added, as if in fear or wonder, "I cannot admit for an instant that any modern Power can hope or *wish* for war!"

Two other conversations I wish to record here to prove my point. One with Count Münster, the German, and one with Count Welsersheimb, the Austrian chief delegate.

You must consider that all of us were burning to know how things were going, and

that (as now with the war) conversations had a way of turning to the same subject, however differently started. Nor was it a wonder that my mother, who received a lot and was daily "at home" between five and seven, should hear many thoughts uttered in the intimacy of her drawing-room the candid expression of which was *not* meant for the larger arena of the conference, nor for the ears of brother statesmen.

Like everybody else, Count Münster (who for his anti-peaceful opposition to the general trend of thought had earned from his colleagues the nickname of "Comte Monstre" or "Vieux Monstre") also admired my beautiful mother very much. Germans will say a good deal to a woman, not out of trustfulness, but out of the sincere conviction reposing at the bottom of each Teuton heart that women are unimportant—negligible quantities, in fact. My mother, alarmed, I suppose, by Baron de Staal's outburst, soon found occasion to "draw" Count Münster upon the subject that interested her. He also happened to drop in alone to tea one day, and Mamma "went" for him, in the disarming, half serious, half jocose way in which she excelled. "I

hear," she said, "that we are accounted a bad, bad lot, for opposing the general trend of ideas towards peace by arbitration. Of course, I, as woman, can hardly judge; I confess frankly I do not understand it."

The "Monstre" was outwardly no monster at all; he was a fine-looking, stately old gentleman of the old school: nothing but the cold look in his eyes and his rather cruel jaw gave him away as a Boche.

"Oh, beautiful lady!" he replied, "how *should* women comprehend affairs of state? Let them remain out of it, and take example from charming creatures [*reizende Wesen*, in German] like you and your daughter, and create a haven of rest such as this delightful house for the joy and repose of weary men like myself and my colleagues."

My mother received this compliment with a sweetly mischievous smile, directed partly at me.

It was, had Münster but known it, an acknowledgment of the cleverly worded question that had been put to him.

Clever, in pretending lack of understanding, and so flattering his vanity; clever, too, in identifying herself with the German factions in her "we" instead of taking up the con-

trary attitude. She went on, with the same twinkle in her eyes:

"Of course, we cannot judge affairs of State, but we *have* a legitimate interest all the *same!*"

"Ah! Yes, in the question of arbitration. A Utopia, madam! Believe me, a Utopia. We Germans believe in maintaining peace, of course—so does our Emperor; but a sensible peace, armed to the teeth. Personally I have nothing against signing the convention: What is a convention but a parchment? One signs it; it gives pleasure to everybody for the time being, *and at the historical moment, on passe outre, sans phrases,*[1] *and if one is powerful enough, one can always make one's bow and one's excuses to posterity.*"

[You see that Bethmann-Hollweg had his predecessors in opinion.]

"The chancelleries of Europe, and I dare say of Asia, are stocked with documents like this. But you see, my personal opinion counts for nothing, I have to follow the given mot d'ordre,[2] and that is against signing anything. You see, we have the most powerful army in the world, the most perfect war-machine as

[1] One steps over it without more ado.
[2] Watchword.

yet invented, our navy is daily growing in strength. Our people have made a god of the army, which they worship respectfully, and we could never give them sufficient reasons for disarmament. The pride in the army is a national pride, since the days of the 'Alte Fritz.' And arbitration? I, too, consider it a Utopia, as I told you. War *will* be as long as the world lasts, and whoever the aggressor, *he will always be in the right as long as he remains victorious!*"

["Wer immer auch anfängt, siegen muss man; dann hat man Recht." These were the very words.]

"And Austria?" asked my mother.

"Austria, madam, will have to do as we wish; she learnt her lesson in '66." This was actually a more truthful than a tactful answer.

"But," objected Mamma, "does Germany ever harbour thoughts of aggression, for you to talk as you do, Count Münster?"

"Madam, you ask too much; I am a diplomat, and not a soldier. But I think a war would do good to the world in general. And this I know, that Germany's sword will fly out of its scabbard *upon the day that any one dares to dispute her right to be the first among*

the nations, for we are ready! We are the only Power—and, perhaps, Austria [this as a tardy afterthought of politeness]—*which is not asleep* at the present moment."

"Asleep? What *do* you mean?" asked Mamma.

"Asleep! madam; *and that is lucky for us.* Italy is asleep, and sometimes has nightmares; however, we can manage *her.* England is asleep. She will never think of having a proper army. She will degenerate in her luxury, splutter, and go out, in time. Look, even the Boers will be able to beat her as they like. France is asleep, and dreaming dangerous dreams—of revenge. Russia is asleep, and dreaming of peace—*a dream full of peril, when your neighbours dream of war.*"

"Her neighbours dream of war! What *do* you mean?" cried my mother, for once losing her composure.

He had gone farther in giving himself away than he intended; one saw it, for a fleeting second, in his face. Then he parried calmly and cleverly enough.

"But, madam, I mean her neighbours in Asia, of course. I am a great believer in the Yellow Peril—are not you?"

Mamma answered at random, though she

had regained self-possession, and soon afterwards, the conversation having become trivial and the hour late, Count Münster left us.

I shall never forget my mother's beautiful eyes, darkened by fear and horror, fixed upon me. Then she covered her face, and in intense agitation cried: "Tu l'as entendu, tu l'as entendu! Pas pour un instant je ne crois qu'il a pensé à l'Asie, à ce moment-là. Mon Dieu, de grâce—non, non, *pas cela!* Pas une guerre entre mon pays et le vôtre! J'espère mourir, si cela devait arriver!"[1]

She was terribly upset. Later she said thoughtfully: "Je demanderai cependant son opinion à Welsersheimb. J'essayerai de savoir. Papa dit qu'il n'est pas brillant, mais je le crois un honnête homme."[2]

She did try soon afterwards, with the following result. Welsersheimb saw some peril for the Germanic elements in Austria. He feared their being unable to keep the Slav

[1] "You heard him, you heard him! Not for one moment do I believe he was thinking of Asia just then. Oh Heaven! no, no, *not that!* Not a war between my country and yours! I hope I shall die, if that is to come to pass!"

[2] "All the same, I shall ask Welsersheimb's opinion. I shall try to find out. Papa says he's not brilliant, but I believe him to be an honest man."

and Hungarian elements in subjection, and feared, too, that if ever Russia became a constitutional monarchy, these dissatisfied nationalities would rally on her side. "It is only the fear of your autocratic régime that keeps our Slavs away from you. Our present policy is grounded on the hope of one day wiping out the smaller Balkan States, with the help of Germany and Turkey. That is the arrière-pensée of Germany's new Oriental politics.

"But if Germany really helps us in this, will she leave us to enjoy our victory, and will Russia not interfere? Will it be possible at all, with the Hungarians nothing better than rebels, the Poles eternally unreliable, the other Slav contingents with Russian sympathies, and the Italians frankly traitors?"

My mother was right; Welsersheimb was at least honest, as he proved by another candid outburst: "Madam, you are a Russian born, and I will tell you that I personally, like my chief, Goluchowsky, am in no way a friend of any aggressive politics, and especially do I think that we should always keep on the soft side of Russia, to whom we owe, after all, so much. But, you see, the young elements, both with us and in Germany, are very

dangerous. My wife is German, as you know, and it really frightens me when I hear people talk there. It is all about the 'grandiose army, and the necessity of putting it to *some* use, and the waste of letting it rot,' etc. At present they seem not to have found the 'ideal enemy,' but it is a dangerous tendency to paint the devil upon the wall.

"And unfortunately there are many people in Austria not one whit saner, with nothing but a swollen head, with much less reason than the Germans. All the rabble that collects around Francis Ferdinand, for instance. He is very generally detested. His following is the small minority, yet it grows, because he, like they, wishes to become great, rise into popularity through a war.

"Perhaps the Archduke is not quite conscious of the harm he is doing as yet, but his ideas have a dangerously bellicose tendency. So far he can do little, because the Emperor hates him. But he is getting old. He was never a very reliable politician, and things are working towards a change more and more every day. The new course is bound to be full of peril—*bound* to be!

"I personally wish the mot d'ordre was not

against signing the conventions—not against the peace-trend of this conference. And especially I wish this mot d'ordre did not *come from Berlin.*"

My mother now hazarded a straight question :

"Do you never fear that the 'ideal enemy,' as you say, may be found in *my* country ? "

"*Yes, I fear it.* We are not strong enough just now, but Germany is ever behind us, preaching the Slav peril, going back to the days of Frederick the Great, when, as she says, Russia cheated us both out of the best part of Poland. Saying also, that the Balkans come too much under Russian influence, and that this is a peril for us. My humble opinion is, on the contrary, that it would be better to smooth down racial differences instead of dwelling upon them—in fact, to let sleeping dogs lie. It is a risky game playing with them, making gratuitous trouble, to have the glory of conquering it afterwards. Goluchowsky is of the same opinion. Moreover, he thinks that any serious question arising now will mean a world-war. However, we get laughed at 'for being of the old school,' and, anyhow, everything is so embryonic as yet, we can only hope for the best—and wait."

After this conversation, too, my mother was very much worried; but as even the worst pessimists throw off thoughts that seem too monstrous for realization, she finally gave herself a mental shake, saying: "Cela ne *peut* pas être, nous nous forgeons des idées noires à vide. Jamais je ne pourrai croire que l'Empereur François-Joseph consente à un complot contre nous; à une *guerre* contre nous. Ce serait trop infâme, et il me semble que ce serait trop bête aussi." [1]

The most weighty conversations are recorded, to show you how far back dates the singular position of the Germanic Empires. This has been my chief object. Like me, you will have noticed two odd convergences and one strange divergency.

Barons de Staal and Münster both talk of all the chief Powers, except the Central ones, as *being asleep*. That is, acting in blind good faith, unaware of the menacing danger, in the eyes of Staal. Easy preys, eventually, in the eyes of Münster.

[1] "That *cannot* be, and we are building up horrors out of nothing. I shall never believe that the Emperor Francis Joseph will consent to a plot against us; to a *war* against us. It would be too dastardly, and, as far as I can see, too stupid as well."

The divergency is between what Münster said to my mother and what he said to Staal. The former was much more truthful and less evasive, being said to a person he considered of no importance, a mere woman, who, having married into Austria, must automatically cease to feel anything for her own country, and blindly embrace the ideals of her new station, even if that involved renouncing everything till then held sacred. The lack of psychology of the real German is very evident here, and also the national attitude towards women in general. The middle course in these conversations is steered by the frank "ahurissement" (bewilderment) of my father and the honest disquietude of Count Welsersheimb. The rest of what I have to tell is some more conversations and impressions that tend further to show the general flow of ideas and the atmosphere in which we moved. Léon Bourgeois, the chief French delegate, a personal friend of my late uncle Lobanov and of my mother, and d'Estournelle de Constant were perhaps the most enthusiastic protagonists of the cause of arbitration. So much for France's thirst for revenge!

I do not personally remember their express-

ing their distaste at the German attitude, but my mother told me that they had done so, to her, though winding up with true French bonhomie: "Ah, bah! Le premier pas est fait, le reste viendra tout seul!"[1] (Again, so much for France's "revengefulness.")

They were brilliant, charming men, both of them, and I shall always remember their talk, that sparkled with wit and humour. Perhaps Bourgeois was the more showy of the two, d'Estournelle was more taciturn at times, though quite an especial friend of mine. Now I suppose he has forgotten my existence, but I shall always remember his enthusiasm, and his kindness to me. Turkhan Pasha was also a constant visitor at our house, and bearing the war in my mind, I clearly recall one of his sayings which is of some interest: "L'Allemagne nous fait la cour depuis quelque temps; cela ne signifie rien de bon pour personne, et j'espère que chez nous, on ne tombera pas dans le panneau—quoique je craigne que oui!"[2] Count Nigra

[1] "Ah, well! the first step is taken, and the rest will follow naturally."

[2] "Germany has been making love to us for some time: that bodes no good to any one, and I hope that our countrymen won't fall into the trap—though I'm afraid they will!"

was a very old friend, and he discussed everything, with all the "fougue" [1] he was capable of. Amongst his sayings the most remarkable was: "Nos chers Alliés s'ils continuent dans la voie actuelle, préparent une guerre européenne—et ils seront fort étonnés si le jour où cela arrive nous dirons: 'Adieu la Triplice.' Car ce jour-là nous aurons à choisir entre une guerre contre eux ou une révolution. Il est triste à dire, que moi qui étais un des plus grands partisans de la Triple Alliance, sur mes vieux jours dois admettre que c'était une faute. Jamais on ne saura même nous tolérer en Autriche, où l'on nous traite en ennemis, et chez nous on est de plus en plus aigri de leurs gaffes, et le nombre des Irrédentistes croit d'une manière qui doit nous donner à penser." [2]

[1] Vehemence.

[2] "If our dear Allies go on as they are now doing, they are making ready for a European war—and they will be highly astonished if when that day comes we say: 'Farewell to the Triple Alliance.' For on that day we shall have to choose between a war with them or a revolution. It is sad to think that I, who was one of the greatest believers in the Triple Alliance, should have in my old age to admit that it was a mistake. We shall never be so much as tolerated in Austria, where they treat us as enemies; our people are being more embittered every day by their blunders,

A lengthy conversation, bearing upon the present subject, took place between us two women, William Stead, and Sir Julian Pauncefote. Stead, like Baron de Staal, had started with the highest hopes, which had in the course of the conference dwindled almost to nothing. He was quite violent in his abuse of the Germans, though, being a confirmed Pacifist, he did not spare England either. Sir Julian came in just as he was saying, "It pleases us to fritter away our forces in wars like the so-called 'Great Boer War' now, which has nothing great in it, except the enormous money-hunger of a few wretched financiers. Yes, Sir Julian, you may glare at me as much as you please; what I say is true none the less. I may go to prison for treason [and some time later he actually *did*], but, all the same, what I am saying is the truth.

"With all that, we are blind to the fact that Germany is arming as fast as she can, is building a navy against ours, is neatly avoiding signing anything at the present conference, and nursing in her head thoughts of world-conquest. And during all that time we shall have done

and the number of Irredentists is increasing in a way which ought to give us food for thought."

nothing but repose upon past laurels, and win a few fresh ones, perhaps, that are not worth the winning. Also we shall have alienated all Europe, by our pose of self-righteous dignity. As if even I, though a Pacifist, couldn't see that if there *is* a European conflagration, it will be impossible for us to stay out of it. It will be a matter of common decency to take our part, if there is foul play somewhere—and there *will* be, trust the Germans for that."

"Good God, man, what a firebrand you are!" interpolated Sir Julian; "keep quiet an instant, can't you, and let a sensible man get in a word edgeways!"

"I suppose *you* are that sensible man?" interrupted Stead, a bit aggressively. "We *are* a convincing lot, are we not, preaching peace, with a war upon our hands?"

Pauncefote was a wise and a patient man, because he only smiled, and then went on: "I personally regret the Boer War as much as any one can, but once started, England cannot very well back out of it, can she? You would not like us to take up a craven attitude, would you?

"Let us leave the Boers out of our present discussion and look a little farther ahead.

Surely you do not seriously believe that Germany will persist in her present attitude for ever? She will be convinced of her error, and sign with the rest of us. At least, that is my fond hope."

"Sir Julian, take it from me," resumed Stead, "your fond hope, if ever realized, will only mean one more lie in the annals of diplomacy, that is, provided Germany *does* sign, which I doubt.

"*We* shall sign in good faith, of course, and, like fools, think all is well in this best of worlds, and we shall go to sleep more soundly than ever. Whilst Germany, *if* she signs (mind you, it is a big *if*), will use her signature only as a screen, and secretly go on preparing a war all the same.

"It is not for nothing that 'Willie of the universal talents' among other things fancies himself a Napoleon! Good God! You in England never *read* anything, that is one of the troubles! Go and get their literature, and read it! It is all about their beloved glorious year of '70, or about more 'gory glory' to come. And study the Kaiser's speeches, too; they all begin with protestations of peacefulness, and *all* end up with exhortations towards

virtues *quite* other than peaceful! You might as well say that old Fritz drilled his army for his private pleasure only. But mind you, one thing is possible: that the Kaiser is his own dupe. That he does not *altogether* realize whither this tin-soldier-parading, and blowing-of-trumpets-and-horns, may lead. That he will one day wake, very much astonished to find that his pet playthings are *not* tin, and have become too strong for him to manage. It may well be that William II, like Frankenstein, is unconsciously helping to create a monster that will one day turn upon him and devour him. The man is chiefly an actor, of some showy talent, not unlike Nero in a twentieth-century setting, and his war torches may one day be none the less cruel, if more modern, than Nero's lights of horror! And *they* will shine over a world-wide charnel-house! Meanwhile I shall go on, like the fool that I am, preaching peace and goodwill to mankind at large, Germany included; but I fear I shall be but another 'Voice crying in the wilderness!'"

Only those who have heard William Stead talk can have any idea of the picturesqueness and the intense psychic force that emanated from his speech and his whole personality.

He was something of a saint in his way, and his words impressed one as those of the ancient prophets must have done. And I for one believed he was gifted with second-sight. I was much honoured by his giving me his friendship, and my feeling for him bordered upon veneration. One had only to look into his penetrating, bright blue eyes to be sure that more than ordinary earthly wisdom dwelt there.

Certain it is, that we all felt silent after his speech. It was some time before Sir Julian replied: "I sincerely hope you are wrong. Yet I admit there is sense in what you say. Things *may* turn out like that, if our very *worst* fears—fears we do not allow ourselves to harbour, hardly even to formulate as yet—should take shape and materialize. God be merciful upon humanity, and spare us the reality of such a nightmare!"

The representatives of the smaller States were unanimously in favour of arbitration, and this feeling was perhaps best expressed by Bernard, the Belgian delegate:

"Nous autres petits pays, dont la force et la richesse est dans le commerce paisible, n'avons qu'à gagner si les Grandes Puissances

se tiennent tranquilles. Pourvu que l'on ne casse pas de sucre sur *notre* dos, c'est tout ce que nous pouvons demander. Comme gloire il nous suffit que Waterloo soit situé en Belgique ! C'est un monument historique, qui nous suffit pour plusieurs siècles. Du reste, notre neutralité étant garantie par toutes les Grandes Puissances, je ne vois pas qui pourrait nous tomber dessus. Et puis cette conférence devra aboutir un jour ou l'autre. A moins d'un aveuglement absolu le monde devra bien en venir là. Il s'est tellement internationalisé depuis cinq ans, les uns ont tellement besoin des autres, qu'à moins d'un coup de folie, qui malheureusement reste toujours possible, je crois que nous sommes assez sûrs de la Paix entre Blancs—jusqu'au Péril jaune, s'il vient jamais celui-là ! " [1]

[1] " We small nations, whose strength and wealth consist in peaceable commerce, shall be all the better off if the Great Powers remain quiet. So long as no one tries his fists on *our* face, that is all we can ask. It is sufficient glory for us that Waterloo is situated in Belgium ! That is an historical monument that will suffice us for several centuries. Besides, our neutrality is vouched for by all the Great Powers, so that I don't see who could 'go' for us. And this conference will have to bear fruit some time or another. Unless the world is absolutely blind it will have to accept our ideal in the end. During the last five years it has

At all events, one of the cleverest heads in Belgium never foresaw any trouble for his country, because he implicitly believed in the honesty of the signatories of the treaty, so infamously broken by the Germans since then. "Sauf un coup de folie!" And later I will tell you how I saw this act of madness accomplished.

America, China, and Japan were equally ready to sign the treaties, though, being Transatlantic Powers (except China, and she was almost as far off), they naturally took a cooler interest in this burning question of arbitration. Though I hear that they, especially America, collaborated most heartily for the good cause.

I have almost done with my recollections about the Peace Conference. What happened within the closed doors of the "Huis ten Bosch" is a matter for official history. Everybody knows to-day that the treaty for arbitration was signed by all the Powers, small and great, except Germany, Austria-Hungary,

become so much more international, the nations have so much need of each other, that except for an act of madness—which is unfortunately always a possibility—I think we are fairly certain of peace between white nations, even to the Yellow Peril, if that should ever approach."

and (as I have but lately heard) Turkey. I do not even know whether this latter is correct.

Anybody visiting The Hague can contemplate the Peace Palace, built by Andrew Carnegie. There it stands, a monument to the fallacy of honest human hopes and human work. A monument, too, to a pair of traitors among the nations.

One can only wonder how we have all remained so blind to danger, in spite of so many signs that should have warned us in good time. Only the very few saw clearly, and those few were scoffed at and derided.

I wish to say a word here about another Russian delegate, Mr. Martens, who said something quite personal to me, the truth of which came back to me ever so often, at the beginning of the war: "Olga Alexandrovna, vous avez l'âme russe et le cœur russe, si complètement, si indiscutablement, que vous devriez dire à votre jolie maman de vous mener dans le monde en Russie au lieu de Vienne et Pest. Mariez-vous en Russie, ma chère enfant. L'avenir appartient aux jeunes, à vous et à d'autres. En cas de conflit entre nos pays, vous garderez toujours la même âme, le même cœur; vous n'êtes pas de celles qui changent facilement.

Et alors vous allez souffrir mort et martyre, si vous êtes d'un autre côté que le nôtre. On est Slave ou l'on ne l'est pas ; cela ne se discute, ni ne se change, et vous l'êtes profondément." [1]

I told him that I knew he spoke the truth ; but how was I to believe that there ever would be a conflict between the two countries ? One does not like looking disagreeable truths in the face at nineteen.

" La possibilité y est, mon enfant," he resumed after a pause, " car l'Autriche est ambitieuse et maladroite, et l'Allemagne, ambitieuse et brutale, et nous sommes à leurs portes, plus paisibles, plus grands, plus riches, et plus désorganisés qu'eux.

" Ce n'est pas pour rien qu'ils ne veulent rien entendre, ni de Paix, ni d'Arbitrage.

[1] " Olga Alexandrovna, you are heart and soul a Russian, so completely and indisputably so that you ought to tell your pretty mamma to bring you out in Russia instead of at Vienna and Budapest. Marry a Russian, my dear child. The future belongs to the young, to you and other young people. If there should come a conflict between our countries, you will always be of the same mind and the same heart ; you are not one of those who alter readily. And then you will suffer death and martyrdom if you are on another side than ours. One is either a Slav or one is not ; there is no question about it, nor is there any room for change, and you are a Slav through and through."

Les petits pays se croient en sécurité—*rien* n'est plus faux ! S'il y a guerre, c'est que ce sera l'Autriche ou l'Allemagne qui voudra s'agrandir, en anéantissant quelque petit pays, qui sera ou trop riche, à leur gré, ou sur leur chemin—*ou les deux.* Si les autres pays laissaient lâchement faire, ce serait une route pour eux — sinon ce sera la guerre européenne. Vous ne me croyez pas, Olga Alexandrovna, mais vous verrez cela probablement. Vous savez que je vous aime beaucoup, n'est-ce pas ? Eh bien, je voudrais vous voir Russe par le fait, sans quoi vous allez beaucoup pleurer un jour. Encore une fois, croyez en un vieux, qui le sait lui ; on ne change jamais son âme, et la vôtre est la nôtre, absolument." [1]

[1] " The possibility exists, my child, for Austria is ambitious and clumsy, and Germany is ambitious and brutal ; we are at their gates, and we are more peaceable, greater, wealthier, and less organized than they.

" It is not for nothing that they will have nothing to do with Peace or Arbitration. The small nations are thinking themselves safe—*nothing* is more untrue ! If there is war, it will be because Austria or Germany wants to expand by wiping out some small country which is too rich for their taste, or in their way, *or both.* If the other countries were cowardly enough to look on and do nothing, it would be a road for them—if not, it will mean a European war. You don't believe me, Olga Alexandrovna, but you will probably see it take place. You know I am

God bless you, kind friend! I have thought of you so often in my time of stress, and realized how entirely right you were. I have not, I *could* not change my soul, just as you foretold. And now I am a Russian as you wished me to be, not by chance, but by my own free choice and will. At that time I was unformed and entirely dependent upon my mother, and I repeatedly asked him to tell *her* all this.

I remember his reply: "Agissez vous-même; je vous ai dit que l'avenir était aux jeunes. Votre mère a bien assez de soucis, je ne veux pas y ajouter. Je vous prierai même de ne rien lui dire de mes avertissements et pressentiments." [1]

And upon this last prophecy I close the chapter of my reminiscences of the Peace Conference.

very fond of you, don't you? Well, I should like to see you a Russian for good and all, otherwise there will be many tears in store for you. Once more, do believe an old man who knows that one's soul is never changed, and your soul is ours entirely."

[1] "Act for yourself; I told you the future was for the young. Your mother has plenty of worries, and I don't want to add to them. I shall even ask you not to tell her of my warnings and presentiments."



ARCHDUCHESS ISABELLE AND HER SON, ARCHDUKE ALBRECHT.

CHAPTER III

AT THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

My mother died in 1902, and I have often thought of a saying of hers: "Je préférerais te voir fille de chambre que dame d'honneur." [1] She was right, as she always was. I found it out to my sorrow.

It was most unwillingly that I took upon me a burden that should never have been put upon a girl barely twenty-three.

I was left no option, however. I was made to feel, all too plainly, that I was unwelcome in my father's house after my mother's death. Bitterness and pride urged me to take up a position for which my few, but belligerent, qualities rendered me particularly unfit. I had the misfortune to be proud, fearless, and truthful. These were disqualifications for one who would serve the House of Habsburg. I do not

[1] "I would rather see you a chambermaid than a maid-of-honour."

intend writing a *chronique scandaleuse* of the Austrian Court, much as there would be to tell in this respect. It has always seemed to me a particularly vulgar thing to do, if you have been in a position where unsavoury secrets necessarily came your way, to make use of this privilege and divulge such private affairs of your former employers. Politically the land lies differently. Many of the things said were uttered with the deliberate intention of hurting and wounding me, contrary to every decent feeling of delicacy in regard to a lady at their mercy. Others were spoken with a carelessness full of brutality. My attitude on these occasions was definitely antagonistic. They were fairly warned. If they did not heed the warning, my conscience certainly absolves me now from using their words against them. I wish to serve Russia, and to show her how, long before the war started, the feeling Austria bore her was that of a jealous enmity.

I want to convince even the extremest group of Socialists that this war was *no* outcome of Imperialistic, aggressive policy on *our* part, but a dire, unwelcome, and bitter necessity, forced upon us, and long hoped and worked

for by Austria and Germany. I wish to avoid all personally vindictive spirit, as I always think it detracts from the value of one's statements; so that in the following pages you will find both attitudes of mind justly represented—the good and the bad equally set forth.

I will leave it to the impartial reader to judge as coolly as he wishes. I will not set down any of my personal suffering or grief, except when it bears upon the present situation of the world. It will, perhaps, explain *why* in the beginning of the war I left what I consider the cause of evil for what I honestly believe to be the cause of good.

The Archduchess Isabelle is a clever, tyrannical, somewhat self-righteous woman, not easy to serve, in that everything with her depends on caprice. Her husband, the Archduke Frederick, is a kindly, stupid man, very much managed by his wife. And, great heavens! *how* tactless! The experience was unpleasant at the time, but it serves me well now, because had he had the tact that goes with brains, added to good feeling, I should not have heard as many candid utterances about Russia as I did. And even

if not brilliant, the Archduke, commander of several army corps, General, etc., was certainly "in the know" of military affairs. A proof as to this is his immediate nomination as commander of all the Austro-Hungarian armies as soon as the war broke out, a position he occupied up to the death of the Emperor Francis Joseph.

It was during the Russo-Japanese War, when I used to study the papers with the fervent hope of *at last* finding some better news in them for us. The Archduke saw me and came up to talk: "Ah, fair one, do you by any chance hope to find Russia recuperating? Well *I* hope, *we all* in Austria hope, that it will go from bad to worse for her. Our one interest is to see her weakened, forced to her knees!"

Used to senseless jests on the part of the Archduke before this, I believed this to be a particularly coarse one. I was astonished, too, at the suddenness and violence of this direct attack. I left the room (quite against any etiquette), hoping thereby to show him clearly the full measure of my contempt.

But nothing is quite so pachydermatous as a prince when he thinks he has got hold of

a joke he can try upon some one he believes defenceless. The second time he volunteered a similar statement deliberately, with the corner of his eye fixed upon me, to see if I would wince: "Good! good! Russia beaten again—her best ships sunk! Hurrah! Bravo for the Japanese! They are doing *our work splendidly!* The German Emperor must be pleased too! A nice spoke in the wheel of the 'Slavonic Peril,' so much nearer, so much more dangerous than the yellow one! Hurrah! hurrah!" This remarkable speech was not addressed to me personally. We were quite a large company, and among them several generals and other military men. All agreed with more heartiness even than was necessary to show before an utterance of a prince of the blood. One saw clearly that this piece of eloquence had *all* their heartfelt sympathy. Next to me stood the children's French governess (an Alsatian, by the way, Mademoiselle Ulrich). I always liked and respected her, because she remained independent in her views, in spite of the demoralizing court influence. She had always been very kind and helpful to me. Now she saw me go white with anger, and took a step forward, in order to tell the Archduke

to excuse himself before me for his tactlessness. They all knew I had relations in this unlucky war. To her astonishment I restrained her. I wanted to teach my lesson at my own hour, and in my own way. By this time I was *sure* that the dastardly insults *would* be repeated. It lay too near their hearts to let them keep silent.

I remember Mademoiselle Ulrich saying to me: "Mais alors, cela vous est égal ?—cela n'est pas croyable"; and I replied: "Cela m'est si peu égal, que si cela se répète, je demanderai ma démission. Mais je ne veux pas d'esclandre maintenant, car je veux être sûre de mon affaire — être calme et dire *tout* ce que je pense, sans en faire une affaire d'Etat, ce que cela deviendrait certainement devant tous ces généraux." [1]

The occasion came even sooner than I expected—two days later, after dinner. The whole family was assembled, and the "suites,"

[1] "Why, don't you mind? but that is incredible"; . . . "I mind so deeply that if this occurs again I shall give notice. But I don't want to set a scandal afoot just now, for I want to make sure of my case—to keep calm and say *everything* I think without making of it all an affair of State, which it would certainly become in front of all these generals."



FIELD-MARSHAL PASKEVITCH.

To face p. 79.

too, when the Archduke, holding the evening paper, came up to me and brandished it in front of me: "*Read,* READ! Oh, *why* are we not sufficiently strong, sufficiently ready to fall on their rear *now! Now!* To help the Japanese annihilate the giant completely! What a day for Austria! What a day for the House of Habsburg, when we shall be able to build a huge empire upon the ruins of the Tsar's dominions!" I stood facing him, and replied: "Such a speech comes fitly indeed from the lips of a member of your House to the great-granddaughter of Field-Marshal Paskévitsch. Where, pray, would the Austrian Empire, the dynasty of the Habsburgs, be to-day had Emperor Nicholas I not sent Paskévitsch and his armies to your help in '48? Do you forget that the Hungarian revolutionary troops were nearing the gates of Vienna; that you were practically lost, when you humbly implored the help of the Power you now so ardently wish to see in the dust? Are you never afraid of God and His vengeance when you speak as you do? As for me, I am going to leave your court and your service," I added, turning to the Archduchess.

If lightning had suddenly struck the house they could not have looked more aghast than they did, when I stood in my concentrated anger, calmly defying them, and for a finish to my tirade flinging them my wish to leave. There was a silence for several seconds. Then I was surrounded; excuses were showered upon me; I was asked for my silence concerning this episode (a promise I *never gave*). They swore I would never hear a word against Russia any more. They never meant anything beyond a joke (?), etc., etc. I was filled with contempt. For them, for their faithless, thankless souls! For myself, because I half-heartedly accepted their excuses and remained.

Where had I to go, after all? A girl of twenty-four, with no place in her own home? And had I gone, as I meant at that instant to go, to my mother's people in Russia, would they have believed my tale? Would they not have said it was stupid of me to have got so angry at a "mere joke"! For, alas! with us, they would *not* believe in Austria's hostility. I talked about it informally to Count Kapuist, our ambassador in Vienna, and to Baron Budberg. (The latter had been a great friend of my dear mother's.) They both

pooh-poohed my ideas: "Que voulez-vous? l'Archiduc Frédéric est stupide, je veux bien, et tout le monde le sait. C'était d'un manque de goût exécrable de dire ce qu'il a dit devant vous. Mais de là à croire que l'Autriche nous veuille sérieusement du mal, bah! D'abord l'Allemagne ne le permettrait jamais, et l'Autriche dépend entièrement de l'Allemagne." [1]

I answered:

"L'Autriche dépend 'de facto' de l'Allemagne, mais attendu qu'au fond elle la déteste, c'est un fait qu'elle ne veut ni voir, ni croire! Du reste, ce que vous dites de l'Archiduc Frédéric, vous pouvez carrément le dire de l'Autriche tout entière. *Elle est bête!* J'en sais un peu quelque chose là-dessus. J'entends continulelement vaticiner eurs généraux et leurs autres sommités! Mais croyez-moi, bête ou non, ils sont *mal* disposés contre nous." [2]

[1] "What do you expect? the Archduke Frederick is stupid, I admit, and every one knows it. It was an execrable want of taste to say what he did in your presence. But to believe from that that Austria wishes us ill—nonsense! To begin with, Germany would never allow it, and Austria depends entirely on Germany."

[2] "Austria depends 'de facto' on Germany, but seeing that in her heart she detests her, this is a fact that she is willing neither to see nor to believe! besides, what you say of the Archduke Frederick you can say flatly of all Austria.

Could I hope to convince them? No, it was not possible! They laughed at me for a violent little Hungarian rebel! (By the way, that was exactly what the Archduke had called me after the dispute.) Many a time have I cursed fate then for making me look so young, when I was a full-grown woman, with the observing head of a man upon my shoulders. I was spoilt, petted, made love to, but I realized that people never took a so-called "pretty woman" seriously. On the other hand, had they believed I had any brains, would they have talked as freely before me as they did, and should I have heard all these things? Perhaps not, and perhaps all is for the best after all. Now I am almost forty, and my hair is grey; my worst previsions and fears are realized—will you believe me now?

I insisted further with Budberg, whom I had known since the days of my babyhood: "Mais croyez-vous que d'être bête, comme nous avons admis que l'Autriche l'était [so much he *had* admitted also], soit une carte

She is stupid. I know something about that. I am continually hearing the prophecies of their generals and other mighty men! But, believe me, stupid or not, they are *badly* disposed towards us."

favorable dans notre jeu ?" "Certainement ! Quoi qu'ils fassent, toujours admis qu'ils fassent jamais quelque chose contre nous, il nous sera plus facile de déjouer leurs tours !" "Ah, çà," I retorted, "c'est cela qui vous trompe ! Bête je veux bien, mais *faux*, *faux*, jusqu'à la moelle, cela ils le sont avant tout. Et c'est ce que nous ne sommes pas pour deux sous, et c'est comme cela que nous serons attrapés, parce que nous ne *mentons* pas, comme eux. Et l'Allemagne, elle, n'est pas bête, et qui vous dit que l'Allemagne ne se servira pas un jour de la bêtise de l'Autriche pour nous tomber dessus quand il lui plaira ? Et qui vous donne la sécurité, 'qu'elle ne voudra jamais,' comme vous dites ? Avez-vous jamais parlé au Baron de Staal et lui avez-vous demandé si, après la Conférence de la Paix, il en était si sûr, *lui ?*" [1]

[1] "But do you think that this stupidity (which we have admitted is Austria's) is a high card in our game ?"

"Certainly ! Whatever they do, always admitting that they will do something against us, it will be all the easier for us to beat them at their own game."

"Well then, that's where you are mistaken ! They are stupid if you like, but before everything they are *false*, *false* to the marrow of their bones. And that is a game we cannot play, and that is how we shall be caught, because we don't tell lies as they do. As for Germany, she is not

But it was perfectly useless. Seemingly I, too, had uttered a little prophecy, if you think that early in 1914 Germany refused arbitration on behalf of Austria under the pretext of "localizing the fight between Austria and Servia." Localizing the fight between a tiger and a cat, indeed; to the shame of the rest of the world, had it consented to the dishonour of merely looking on! I also asked Budberg whether he considered it unimportant that the Archduke had mentioned how pleased *the Kaiser* would be at our defeats? And what he thought this Imperial pleasure could be about? According to Budberg, it was only "just another stupid idea of old Frederick's."

I left it at that. After this, I tried merely to follow the stream. I wasn't ugly, and I was somewhat spoilt. "Take the goods that the gods provide" became my motto. It does not follow that I did not keep my ears open, when interesting things happened to come my way. Quite the contrary; and here is the proof: At

stupid, and how do you know that Germany will not one day make use of Austria's stupidity to fall upon us when she chooses? and how is it you are so certain that she 'will never so choose,' as you say? Have you ever spoken to Baron de Staal and asked him whether after the Peace Conference he himself was still *certain* of it?"

a court function I stood next to Prince Rudolf Lichtenstein and his cousin Henry, then Austrian ambassador to Russia. Their conversation was fateful enough! The ambassador, a true friend of ours, said that he felt himself vacillating in his position (he was asked to retire the same year) because the Austrian political face was changing to such an extent as to render his situation, as one of the old school, more than difficult: "I must admit that Goluchowsky does everything to keep peace. But you will see, he will not remain for long. They are working against him from underneath, and from *far above.* (Meaning Francis Ferdinand, *I think.*) I can tell you, everything is being done here to provoke Russia, a Power whom I consider, and shall always consider, as entirely peaceful and well-meaning towards us. She has at present her Asiatic conflict, but that, too, was none of her wishing, though she might have foreseen it. [Here I leave out all he said about the Russo-Japanese War, out of consideration for our present Allies.] You all here, and in that d——d Germany specially, count upon Russia's disorganization. But if Russia ever realizes *that she is being sold by you,* be

assured she will stand like one man, and beat you too, as you will have deserved, if you go on with your suicidal politics over here."

His cousin here took him up with animation: "Suicidal politics! you may well call them so! With three-quarters of all our population either Slavs or of Slav origin, we are running blindfold into an anti-Russian, anti-Slav policy! And as you state quite correctly, only Goluchowsky and a few other honest men are trying to counterbalance this folly, and keep peace and order. Where all this is to lead us to eventually, unless to ruin, I cannot imagine. The Emperor withdraws his interest from things more and more. His every other word is: 'Go to Francis Ferdinand. As it is he can hardly wait decently for my death! Go and ask *him*, I am tired!' And Francis Ferdinand makes use of the old man's apathy, and is forming a strong party—*and believe me it is a war party!* He is collecting all the ambitious younger men around him. Unfortunately, Austria is full of disappointed ambitions. We have no talent for discovering genius, and none either in the way of smoothing down

the people we have hopelessly offended. Francis Ferdinand makes use of all the discontented elements. Strange to say, he really dislikes Germany and her Emperor. If he were strong enough he would like best to fight *him.* But as they are so powerful as to be practically unattackable, he will work *with* him, and *for* him, as long as it brings him 'A' war, during which he can rise into popularity. After having got himself thoroughly hated through the length and the breadth of the Monarchy, he will *now* work every lever to regain what he has lost. And he sees in a victorious war *the only way of reigning at all.* Officially he makes love to the Slavs, but only to lull them into security, to have a hold upon them. In truth, everything and everybody are only pawns, to serve his ambition and to secure the throne to his issue. Never mind his oath"—as Prince Henry and I were going to interrupt him—"he will not be the first of his house to go back upon his word, nor the first monarch!" Prince Henry shook his head sadly: "Well, Rudi, you sit here at home and see one side, I sit in Russia and see the other. It is queer, isn't it, that we should be so agreed? You only confirm

all my worst fears and give me explanations for them. And you, poor child [this was addressed to me, whom he had known from babyhood, as a friend of my parents], what will *you* do? You look such an alien here, and in case of a conflict—oh my poor little girl, it will go hardly with you! With me too, by the way, for I love Russia very dearly; she has become my second country. Let us hope we are seeing things too darkly, and *that a timely assassin may deliver us of Francis Ferdinand* before he has entirely and hopelessly 'brouillé les cartes.'[1] He runs a clear chance of this, even as near home as his own Konopischt. I have a cousin who has estates near there, and he told me that he may be shot by one of his own keepers, for all one knows. By Jove, the man *is* loathed—and no wonder; look at his ugly jowl and his crocodile eyes!"

"By the way, your Isabella does not love him either, since he married her Lady-in-Waiting instead of her daughter!" (Sophie Chotek had been my predecessor once removed when the Archduke married her, and so disappointed the hope of seeing one of "the Frederick

[1] Muddled the situation.

girls," as they were commonly called, become the future Empress.)

"No," I replied; "but they love the German Emperor, even whilst they laugh and mock at his many pretensions and affectations, and at his mania for clothes. And I don't see that loving *that* one is any better!"

"No," said Henry Lichtenstein thoughtfully; "no, indeed."

"Well, child, I only hope I shall die before I see Austria entirely Germany's slave—a mere pawn, that she will try and play one fine day *against Russia!* Poor Russia! she is much too honest in her liking for us, and so pathetically sure we pay her back in the same coin! Poor Russia! Run away now and dance, madam, and do not make an old man give away diplomatic secrets." He ended up jocosely, though he sighed and seemed troubled. He need not have pulled himself up abruptly, I understood enough as it was: the past obligations and the old friendship were forgotten, or remembered only by a very few. And the new course was inimical to us! And *we?*—we were blind and deaf!

Oh Russia of to-day! Be not blind and deaf *again now* that you are risking your

entire future! I said it before: *you are the men and women, whom as yet unborn generations will either have to curse or to bless,* even hundreds of years hence! Never forget this —I repeat it—never forget your tremendous responsibility. Open your eyes—I say it again —and see the miracle that has happened: Almost the whole world, forgetting its smaller interests, unites now in a combat of glory against a common enemy!

And even to those who call themselves "practical reasoners," but are in truth nothing but egotists, if they wish really to be looked upon as practical let them again look at America!

You accused the old régime of slackness, not without reason. Be not slack yourselves now! Use your hands, your brains, all your best abilities, *believe* me, in strangling the Austro-German hydra! Have I not shown you the dragon's egg hatched, at the very least (to *my* knowledge) ten years before this war actually broke out—ten years' plotting and scheming at least stands to the discredit of the Austro-German marriage. The plan to attack you and annihilate you dates at least back to that time, if not farther still.

In those same years, whenever I went on leave to Russia, did I *ever* hear a word mentioned as to any idea of *aggression* on our part; or even *doubt*, be it the very slightest, that the other Powers were *not* as peaceful as we were? *Never, never!* The refrain I always heard was this: "If only we are left alone to accomplish our internal reorganization! We are so big, we want time and energy and money to do it. War? Who thinks seriously of war in the twentieth century? The Japanese one was our last, we hope. If we reorganize the army, it is but a defensive measure. Enough of stupidity; the Japs taught us a lesson! We must work to put the country in order, to organize and reform, and satisfy legitimate demands everywhere. We shall be fully occupied in making Russia as prosperous and as rich as, with her tremendous resources, she should be. Oh yes, we shall be occupied enough for the next hundred years!" And people smiled hopefully and trustfully, discussed agricultural and other questions—and that was all! No doubt there must have been people who felt the danger coming in Russia, as well as in France, England, Italy,

Belgium, and other States. As a sign of good faith in what is to-day the combination of the Allies, you must, however, remark this: the rare few, who predicted and foresaw the confusion and disaster of to-day, have been systematically "talked down" and treated as little better than madmen in their own countries. The first time Allied Europe really condescended to open one sleepy eye to the truth was after the alerte of Agadir in 1911, whilst the *preparations for aggression* on the part of the Central Powers must surely have begun at least ten years earlier. People all say *now* that it must have been much longer still; and remembering the time of the Peace Conference, I am inclined to agree.

At court, after my somewhat violent "sortie," [1] the Anti-Russian explosions became mere whispers whenever I was near. Yet there is such a thing as atmosphere—and *that* was charged with electricity. And because of the preparations against Russia, my other country, Hungary, also came in for a large share of abuse and mistrust. The situation during the years I was there was full of tension. The court had not gone to Budapest since

[1] Outburst.



the death of Empress Elizabeth (if I remember rightly). At all events, not for a very long time. The Opposition (or Apponyi-Károlyi-Andrássy party as they were also called) worked hard to gain in fact the realization of those promises made to Hungary in 1868, but which had been tacitly withheld since. (Austria was always ready enough to promise—but when did she *keep* her word?) My personal situation was very uncomfortable. In Hungary some of my best friends tried to cut me, because I had in their eyes become "black and yellow." In Austria they looked askance at me, because I was "an abominable cross between a Hungarian and a Russian."

I actually heard those words, though I expect I was not intended to. It happened thus: I had brought the young Archduchess Henriette to see her uncle, Archduke Rainer, and her aunt, Archduchess Marie. My charge went in, whilst the Archduke came out of the inner apartments, escorting an ancient Lady-in-Waiting (Countess Marie Taaffe), who was on the point of leaving. The Archduke, opening the door for Countess Taaffe, who was very deaf (though *I* wasn't), said, "Isabelle has picked up a rare plant there, an

abominable cross between d——d Hungarian and miserable Russian blood!" Countess Taaffe, generally none too kind, yet said in my defence, "Poor child! I assure your Highness she is a very nice and simple girl really!" Funny old lady! In my wicked moments I used to say she loved me because her absurd parrot had taken a strong fancy to me. Nor was this quite untrue!

The same year the court finally decided upon a conciliatory move towards Hungary, and it was arranged that we were going for the spring season to Budapest. I was asked to teach stock phrases in Hungarian to the Archduchesses, in order to make believe they knew the language. It was hoped this would enhance their popularity. In the intimate court circle, the feeling was violently hostile, in spite of the determination to curry favour. I heard my best friends (in the Opposition naturally) *quite* vilely abused, one of the oft-repeated sentences being, "We should like to see men and women of that party undressed and publicly whipped through the streets of Budapest, to constitute an example for the others." Tisza (whom I considered then and still consider the ruination of Hun-

gary) was of course exalted to the skies! Altogether I never before felt so degraded, so helpless, so unhappy in my life. Any protest on my part was quickly quenched in laughter and loud cries of "Hear the rebel!" They were not going to give me the chance of standing by my guns, as I had once done, upon a memorable occasion.

Whispers reached me on all sides that one *had* to make it up with Hungary, *in case of a war!* One could not give them a pretext of perhaps seceding altogether, *the times were too dangerous!*

When I went to Budapest, as Lady-in-Waiting, *one* man in particular cut me dead. It was Count Michael Károlyi. I rather loved him for it, because I could understand his feelings so well; indeed I shared them, had he but known! I *did* catch hold of the lapel of his coat one day, and told him I *was* their friend, in spite of appearances; but I doubt whether he believed in my honesty. Nor was I so placed that I could give him a full explanation. When the war broke out, I had a second of breathless hope. Surely Károlyi and his party would not *again* be dupes of Austria and her damnable policy. Surely

they would work against this iniquitous war! Hungary *could* stop it at once, and avenge centuries of insult and ill-treatment by threatening to secede *now!*—they would have merited the admiration of the entire world, for an act of unprecedented civic courage, truly great and heroic! What brilliant promises, what insidious lies flattered the easy vanity of Hungary into once more sacrificing herself for Austria? And O ridicule, O bathos! Before many months were over she was to stand side by side with Turkey, to keep out whom she had shed her best blood for hundreds of years! Now she was to bleed, partly at least, to keep her hereditary enemy *inside* Europe! But to go back to this memorable spring season. It *was* queer to watch the unwilling Hungarians come to heel—slowly, it is true, but come to heel all the same. I hated to see it, all the more as I was used like a decoy-duck in this cursed comedy, like an unwilling tool! One fête succeeded another, and the Highnesses from Vienna lost no time, spared no amiability in regaining the lost ground. All except Francis Ferdinand. Give the devil his due, he was at least honest. He stood

like a statue, and *his* dislike was quite apparent. He neither talked, nor smiled, nor unbent for a single instant. As was said before, his policy was to make love to the Slavonic elements (the majority all over the country). It was not for any particular affection that he held them in, but in order to stop the growing sympathy for Russia that this faction was accused of harbouring. For the war that was in his mind this tendency would prove a serious drawback, if not a catastrophe.

Another queer piece of by-play, during the last two years I was at court, was the sudden and violent Anglomania displayed in Austria. Was it an order from Berlin, who thus made use of her more supple and charming ally to try to counteract the nervousness caused in Great Britain by Germany's ever-increasing naval expenditure ?

I believe it *now !* Because one certainly went very far in trying to make England believe that one loved *her*, and *loathed* Prussia. This was no mere comedy. One did detest and laugh at everything German. But one was in their hands, if there was to be a tearing to pieces of Russia ! And according to Austrian ideas this was a necessity.

One also counted too much upon what was considered the traditional enmity of England to Russia in Asiatic politics. Were they unaware, or merely unwilling to see, that a saner spirit of World-Fraternity was spreading among the nations, and that England, under the wise leadership of King Edward, was slowly giving up her solitary state of splendour, and inclining towards the Franco-Russian Entente? The Agadir alarm, a few years later, where Germany showed more of her teeth than was clever, and was obliged to withdraw ignominiously, did but cement this incipient understanding. Were the English ever the dupes of the Austrians? I am afraid so. We were all blind! or were we only in the position of children who cover their faces in order not to see what they dislike too much? To complete my impressions of the Dual Monarchy, I wish to describe the feelings and position of the various nationalities composing it; all were more or less in conflict with the reigning Germanic caste of Austria. Hungary was dissatisfied, for reasons I have indicated before. I am sorry to say that her own unbalanced condition made her commit in her turn a series of

incredible stupidities and cruelties concerning the Slavonic population under her rule. This conflict between Hungarians proper and the Slav element arose out of an ugly but very human trait. Hungary felt abased, and she looked for one weaker than herself upon whom to wreak her spite. Her suppressed feeling of nationalism made her forget the neighbourliness, the calm living side by side (and the loyal fighting side by side too), that had united the two races through centuries. The Slavonic element had been in the land long before the conquerors under Árpád came from Asia. The two races amalgamated peacefully enough, made a common stand against the Turks, and were mutually necessary to each other. This is especially true of the Rusnicks and Slovaks, inhabiting the whole of the north country, as far down as Budapest. With the Southern Slavs the friction was more frequent in the course of history. That is why my belief is that Austria used Servia as a red rag before a bull, to blind Hungary to the greater issues at stake. Be that as it may, until '48 no serious trouble arose. Then, Hungary's national pride being humbled, she avenged her-

self on the others. In later years even I witnessed idiotic attempts at Magyarization in the northern provinces. Slavonic schools were forbidden, Hungarian ones erected. Places that had had Slavonic names for a thousand years and more were suddenly presented with brand-new Hungarian ones. A stupid, disdainful attitude towards all that was Slav! I can give you a good instance of this. My people came from the north, from a place called Okoliesna (whence the name Okoliezányi of Okolieshna). Well, countless times I was reproached with being "no real Hungarian, but only a wretched Slavonian." I admit the soft impeachment with pleasure; it makes me the more Russian for that, and my paternal grandmother was indeed a Pole. What I am going to say now is very general hearsay, so I do not vouch for it absolutely, but I have heard reliable people say the same thing. In the army the treatment of people of Slav nationality was said to be a disgrace. They were cruelly beaten for the slightest of reasons, and during the Bosnian campaign were used as "cannon fodder" most unmercifully.

So much for the Magyar-Slav question;

now as to the Tschechs or Bohemians. These were deadly sick of the pretensions of the Germanic part of the population, imported into their midst. The papers brought sufficient light into this affair, if I remember rightly, in 1908 or 1909. When a serried battle was fought in Prague between the German and Bohemian students, and the latter were victorious, it was unsafe for some time for Germans to walk unattended in the streets of Prague.

The Poles (in expectation of using them against us) were flattered to their faces and most unmercifully mocked and derided behind their backs. They only existed as prospective preys, soon to become slaves when they had served their end. There was no disguise whatever about it. Only the Hungarians sympathized with the Poles sincerely. In Austria it was but a huge comedy, through which I fancy the more enlightened Poles saw, to judge by their plotting and scheming in Vienna itself. Russia, now she is free and rejuvenated, has indeed a fine task before her, provided she finds both the will and the tact to accomplish it successfully. I mean the liberation and *sanitation* of her Polish brethren. Try and understand me: If we enter into

a federative State with Poland, it will be to her advantage and ours. I do not doubt that the honest and really patriotic elements there will agree with me. By these elements I mean the Polish *people* and the *unegotistical* members of her aristocracy, finance, and commerce. With a view to her own safety and future peace, I wish this for her, because the Austro-German plan leaves out of the question the reunion of the *entire* country, and means to use Russian Poland, as I have myself heard her statesmen proclaim, as "a buffer-State between them and Russia." This latter plan carries a seed of discord in itself that need scarcely be pointed out further. As to the "frondeur" and selfishly ambitious section of the Polish aristocracy, that has been at fault in all the misfortunes of that poor nation—eliminate them, let them go. The sooner Poland gets rid of these trouble-breeders the better. If you doubt my words, then read the History of Poland, and you will *have* to agree with me. The Russian *people* should certainly shake hands, in true fraternity, with the Polish *people*, for they are after all brother Slavs and were jointly "sold" by the Germans and Austrians.

A word more—about the Italian fraction of the population of Austria. Perhaps none of the other nationalities have been quite so much hated, quite so much despised as they. Surely their position was the least enviable of all, scorned and derided on all sides, always mistrusted, given no freedom, unless they denied their nationality, called every bad name under the sun: "Cowards and traitors born" being the most polite of them. According to Austrian ideas, *no* Italian could possess even a single virtue.

Allies indeed! Officially perhaps; but they were *always* treated as enemies. And when Austria had at last got what she wanted—the present war—she *really* expected Italy to fight at her side—she who had never had a considerate action, a loving thought, for her neighbour in the south. If ever a national hatred existed, it was surely between Austria and Italy! I often remember old Count Nigra's joke: "Oui, oui, on est Alliés, et c'est vrai que l'on se déteste si cordialement et si réciproquement, que cela devient *presque* de la sympathie." [1]

[1] "Oh yes, we are Allies, and indeed we hate each other so cordially and so reciprocally that we are *very nearly* in sympathy."

My father died in 1905, in May, and I fell ill soon after that, from strain and overwork, the doctors said.

I went to Russia, to my mother's people, for several months then. Let me repeat again and again, never a breath, never a suspicion of warlike feeling was anywhere to be seen or felt. Had it existed, I must unavoidably have noticed some shadow of it, living as I did for months and months entirely en famille, in the country, with most of my cousins in the army. But there was *none*, absolutely none! How different it was when I returned to court. People fairly fell upon me with questions. "Did they prepare for war in Russia? How was the feeling? How did the 'Military Party' there work, and was it influential?"

I could only reply truthfully, that the "war-talk" was entirely on *this* side of the Carpathians. I never heard any of it in Russia. As to a "Military Party," they had it on the brain in Austria. If it existed at all in Russia, it was certainly kept well in abeyance, one never noticed it. I told them that I had numerous cousins in the army and in the Administration, but I cannot recall a single

warlike speech of any of them. People were much too occupied with the internal troubles to think of a war. This seemed to give them such satisfaction that I should have been warned, *then* and *there*. Stupid as it may sound, I wasn't. But I noticed one new departure; they tried to turn the tables and accuse Russia of deep-laid, hidden plans. I saw this from the quality of the chaff that was poked at me: "Of course she will not tell us—*not she!* She is much too fond of her dear Russia to unveil any of the plots she may have discovered there. Plans to fall upon us and try to annihilate us, no doubt!" It was perfectly useless to protest; this nonsense went on *ad nauseam*.

Unfortunately, I did not attribute much importance to what seemed to me empty jabber, then. I had become engaged to be married, and was in the spring of 1906 to go to my farewell audience in the palace of the Archduke in Vienna. It was the last time I was to see them, and after the audience was over I was retained to lunch.

Then I heard the most illuminatingly brutal avowal of hostility towards us that ever came my way. The man I consider in great

part responsible for the war, Count (then as yet only Baron) Aehrenthal, and his wife were also lunching with their Highnesses that day. His wife had been my immediate predecessor as Lady-in-Waiting to Archduchess Isabelle. Hence probably the intimacy of the talk that will follow. Aehrenthal had just returned from Petrograd, where, to our undoing, he had been Ambassador for several years. I conversed with the young girls, whilst the Archduke, his wife, and Aehrenthal sat opposite upon a sofa.

I was struck by this phrase pronounced by Aehrenthal : " Some of the difficulty will always lie in being able to provoke them sufficiently, they are so annoyingly peaceful, placid, and well-intentioned ! " " They ? " I made sure it was Russia he meant. The next phrase confirmed my fears. It was pronounced by the Archduke : " Very annoying indeed, because, of course, should things crystallize, we should never want the odium of *starting* a war attached to *us*. That might create a fatal divergence of opinion amongst all our nationalities, and might bring upon our heads the wrath of England, which is undesirable."

Then Aehrenthal resumed : " Never fear,

a pretext will be *found* when the time comes! We shall be able to make some move, somewhere in the Balkans, that will *look* perfectly legitimate, yet that Russia will not be able to accept, because she has always stood up for the brotherhood of all the Slavonic people. Curse her! Only think what she has done for Bulgaria! England we shall always be able to conciliate if we stand in with the Turks. She has too many Mahometan subjects to consider ever to change her policy in this respect."

Then the Archduchess put in: "Are the internal troubles really bad in Russia? What about the Revolution there?

"The people everywhere are but as sheep," returned Aehrenthal; "I would not build too much hope upon a total disintegration in Russia. She is so rich, so full of natural resources, that it makes her like a cat, with many more than nine lives. She will always manage to fall upon her feet again, unless our most glorious hope comes true, in making successful trouble in Poland. It must be done slowly and systematically. Polish leaders can always be flattered or bribed into

anything. One can also try to use the clergy to this end. The Catholic clergy is practically international. The Polish people are stupid enough to be led by any fool who can *talk* sufficiently well. We can easily blind them to the self-evident fact that Russia is the only Power that has made her part of Poland a rich country."

"But is not the Polish peasant and the commercial element there very anti-Russian?"

"Really, the majority are not at all so. We must not be foolish, nor indulge in illusions. Russia *did* put a stop to the sinful exploitation of the land and the peasant by its aristocracy. The peasant and the commercial element were never better off in Poland than under the protection and backed by the capital of Russia. But don't let that worry you; they are an excitable people, and can be persuaded by big talk into *anything*, as I said before. Our line is carefully to put them up to it and irritate Poland against Russia. We can always promise them mountains of gold—they will never see them, of course, but by that time they will be in *our* power. A pity we are not ready to fall on Russia *now*, whilst everything is fermenting.

But it will be six or seven years before we shall be strong enough to risk that move—maybe more. Before all, everything must be *quite* safe; we must do nothing premature or silly! Your Highness knows the German Emperor intimately; does your Highness never fear that we may have a disillusion in that quarter? That we may find ourselves 'désavoués,'[1] politically, all of a sudden, by the Germans? It displeases me, and many others here, that we should be so absolutely tied down by what *they* might do or say! We are practically in their leading-strings; and we should try to become more independent, so as to be able to do things on our own responsibility!"

"Dear Baron, what you mention is Francis Ferdinand's pet grievance. But I am afraid a change *at present* is impossible! As to William, I have every reason to believe him sincerely well disposed towards us and our aims. We might try a change if the old man ['der alte Herr,' meaning the old Emperor] pegged out ['abkratzen,' was the elegant Austrian expression], but meanwhile William's private interest is to be nice to us. Did you

[1] Left in the lurch.

not know that our old man pays his debts —many millions of them—and he will be in no hurry to part from his milch-cow." Some laughter and coarse jests followed, and soon after the party broke up.

That was the last I heard and witnessed at the court itself. The same year saw the desertion of the only honestly peaceful politician Austria had, Count Goluchowsky, by birth a Pole, and married to a charming Frenchwoman, Princess Murat; he was the only man with brains and goodwill who had any notion of *international* politics; he had for some time been accomplishing the difficult feat of swimming against a strong current, but succumbed at last to the intrigues of his successor—that same Baron Aehrenthal whose edifying conversation with the Archducal couple I have just recounted.

His father had been of low origin, but had, by luck, married a Countess Thun, and as everything in Austria is practically an affair of family influence, that marriage, with all the high connections it brought, made the son's career a foregone conclusion, given brains and ambition. Aehrenthal was eaten up with the latter, and did not lack the former.

Indeed, a deep and silent but immeasurable ambition was the keynote to his character. As long as he attained what he wished for, empires might fight, fall, or crumble—what cared he? In a dark hour for ourselves and Austria he was nominated Ambassador at Petrograd. Modelling himself in this upon the Germans, whom (or rather whose predominance) he loathed, he made himself into a clever and unscrupulous spy and agent provocateur. Through the good looks and the charm of his wife, he maintained a brilliant position in the social world. His policy was a queer double game: preponderance over Russia in the Balkans, whatever the cost, united to a greater independence from the dictates of Berlin, for Austria—and in this case for himself.

He was going to try to race Germany for greatness (and perfidiousness), blind to the fact, or wilfully ignoring it (in the spirit of "après moi le déluge"), that this race could only have a chance of success if he gave up his other aims, directed against us, and kept up the friendship with Russia. He has often been called Francis Ferdinand's man. He certainly seemed to follow the same hesitating

policy. He ran the same risks. Yet I personally believe he worked more or less alone, and for no one else's benefit except his own aggrandizement. If he met Francis Ferdinand upon the same way, it was accidental—or fatal, as you please. Two falling stars, gathered unintentionally into the same orbit! One cannot but remember, considering the Austrian politics in the latter years, the saying: "Whom the gods wish to destroy they render mad." The fate of the land, its foreign policy, were placed in the hands of an intelligent and unscrupulous adventurer, and one whom I believed to have no conscience at all! After the annexations of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*his* work) his ears were pleasantly tickled, no doubt, by the flattering title of "an Austrian Bismarck" which some short-sighted fools conferred on him. Its indirect consequences are the present war. Aehrenthal was a queer character altogether, distrustful both as a man and as a politician. False himself, he believed everybody else to be equally so.

It is he, I have every reason to know, who, with the authority of one who said he knew the land and the people, cleverly gave the final push to the still wavering public

opinion in Austria, the feeling they expressed in the words "Take care, Russia means mischief!" (Vorsicht! Russland will uns an den Kragen!). Until then Francis Ferdinand, backed by his military party, might plot and plan for a war with us; some deeply initiated people might either approve or disapprove of this. It *was* in the air, as I have shown before, but it had not yet crystallized. Animosity there was, and a wish for aggrandizement at our expense. But it was Aehrenthal who, realizing the trend of public feeling, took it upon himself to direct it. He meant to rise, and saw his opportunity. Being the man he was, it could be foreseen that he would make the most of it.

CHAPTER IV

MY MARRIAGE, AND FURTHER SIGNS AND TOKENS

I WENT to Russia to be married. I had no really near relations in Hungary. Besides, I married a poor man for love, a thing more popular with us than in Austria-Hungary. Most of my friends there disapproved of my choice, not without reason, as I unfortunately came to see, too late. My Russian family stood loyally by me, so it was not surprising that I went to them.

Oddly enough, this expedition to Russia gave me a very conclusive proof as to how entirely one was trusted there. My aunt Paskévitsch had lent me for my honeymoon her house at Temblin, at the very doors of the fortress of Ivangorod. It was in the very middle of the Revolution of 1905–6. (To be exact, in June and July, 1906.)

One may well argue that I was the niece of Princess Paskévitsch, that I and my husband (who, like my father, had never served in the army) did not know a gun from a tea-kettle. All this was true, but after all we *were* aliens, the times *were* troubled, and had anybody harboured feelings of animosity or fear, they might easily have suspected us. If they did not actually wish to think us spies, they might still have found us dangerous, if only as *belonging* to a country they could imagine inimical to them. In any case, they could easily have forbidden us access to the fortress. Nothing of the sort occurred. At first we used to drive there absolutely unchallenged. The only good shop (military stores) being inside Ivangorod, we used to go there quite often. A little later, when the Revolution became more threatening, a *general* order was issued that *every* non-military person had to have a permit before entering the fortress. We got a permanent laissez-passer signed, without the least difficulty, and we went on shopping whenever we wished to. We never encountered the least hostility, not so much as an unfriendly glance or a rough word, nothing but simple

trust and kindness from everybody. And this in a critical time, in the midst of a Revolution. Oh yes! I would any day rather be at the mercy of "inhuman Asiats," "rough barbarians," as the Germans call us, than at that of any representative of the famous "Kultur."

Talking of revolutions, allow me another digression. I wish to make another plea for unity, for safeguarding the beauty of the present Revolution as it stood in the beginning. I am living far from Russia, in a neutral country, and I have heard the unanimous expressions of awed admiration that our Revolution drew from every one at its start. Even some of our enemies, as I heard indirectly, were astonished and admiring, and felt secretly envious. No superfluous bloodshed, no unnecessary cruelty, a minimum of disorder, all things considered. Where were the despised Asiats, the cruel barbarians, our enemies had described? Where were they now? Ah, Russia, *my* Russia, you were magnificent—and all the world bowed in wonder before you. Do not ever sully an absolutely unique page in the world's history! Your shield was fair, among the fairest of the nations—never, *never* disgrace it!

One must feel very strong to be as just, as merciful as you were. Only, for God's sake, *remain* so! I recognized the fundamental beauty of your national character, as I knew it and loved it always, in those first glorious days. As I said, one's soul must be strong to behave so, and that sign of strength, where they looked for disintegrating weakness, frightened our enemies as nothing else could have done. Therefore they set to work at once and tried to slay the newly born Freedom by poisoning it with discord. Too well they know that harmony is the very essence of a nation's life, as strife is the essence of its death.

They wished to destroy the beauty of your unity and tried their best—thank God, so far fruitlessly. Criminal propositions were made to you, agents provocateurs like Grimm were dispatched into your midst. Be on your guard; they may try other tricks to disunite you! Stand firm in unaltered strength of purpose. Say to yourselves: These are the same people who for years have laid a death-trap for us and our allies, into which, out of blind trustfulness, we have *all* fallen. Nothing will change them but defeat, abso-

lute and indisputable. To inflict this is our duty of to-day—let us rise up and accomplish it!

But I must go on with my story. I can show you, step by step, year by year, how they were working for our undoing. By the way, a queer thing comes back to me, regarding my wedding. My husband had a nephew, a young officer in the Austrian army, who was to have come to Russia also, in order to be best man. At the last moment he was forbidden by his military authorities to go. He might have his leave, he might go wherever he liked *except to Russia.* Did they fear he might give something away, being young and indiscreet? I do not know, but the unfriendly fact remains, and caused us much wonder and worry at the time.

In what I am going to tell you next, I wish to say that I do not exonerate myself. I was an idiot, fit for an asylum and nothing else, not to have seen things coming more clearly than I did. Looking back, I can follow the preliminary events of the war, step by step. I will trace them for you, year by year.

1906–1907

I was married in June, and in November I fell dangerously ill. This illness lasted until the month of March of the next year. We transported our Lares and Penates to Venice as soon as I was well enough to be moved, and there I stayed recuperating until the end of the year 1907. Except for the blatant animosity of the Italian people towards all that was Austrian, I did not hear or see anything of any interest politically. Perhaps I was too weak and weary to notice much.

We settled in Venice for five years, and when I had to engage servants I found myself up against the difficulty of their disliking to come to what they *would* call "an Austrian house." I had carefully to explain that both my husband and myself were Hungarian subjects, and, what is more, my mother had been Russian, so that they could serve us without dishonouring their national prejudices. This was all very well for me personally, because I tried to be fair and kindly to them, and so was absolved from being a "Maledetta Austriaca." Unfortunately, my husband took up the tra-

ditional overbearing attitude towards them, with the result that he was frankly detested. In my own mind I am convinced that our Italian Allies could not have kept out of the war even had they wanted to do so. The popular mind was made up. Either war with Austria or a Revolution! Their part in the affair, if they ever had any, was determined by the *Vox populi!*

1908

Two events of world-interest roused me from my apathetic attitude of mind, the result of ill-health and sorrow. The year 1907 ended with the terrible earthquake of Messina, on December 28th. Its repercussion, even as far north as Venice, was felt on the 2nd of January. On New Year's Eve we were discussing this horrible disaster, and at about three o'clock in the morning we had four or five bad "quakes" ourselves, and a terrible panic in the whole town. It seems we owed the fact that Venice escaped serious harm to the elasticity of the foundations. They swayed under the shocks, and so saved the edifices above from destruction. Many houses had

wide cracks, ours among the number, but that was all.

We had another shock a few days later. Of course, all Italy felt the effects of this terrible catastrophe. It was a sort of national mourning all over the country. The Austrian Press chose this very occasion to proclaim that *now* was the moment to make an end of lies and pretences, to break an entirely useless alliance, and to fall upon Italy and smash her, for she would, to a great extent, be financially ruined.

How such lunacy was ever allowed to be hinted, much less permitted to see daylight in print, I cannot say. I can only vouch for the results in Italy. Dangerous manifestations of popular anger took place before the Embassies in Rome and all the Austrian Consulates, and a fearful wave of rage and loathing swept all over the country! Of course, the thing was stifled eventually, the Press muzzled, the articles in question repudiated, belated and lame enough excuses made on the part of Austria. But a great deal of harm was done, and the bad feeling rankled.

On the other hand, something else gave me intense pleasure, namely, that it should have

been *our* navy that was at hand, by the merest chance, when the disaster at Messina happened, *our* sailors, along with the English (though we were the *very* first), to help save what and whom they could out of the very hell that it must have been. Every heartfelt word of thanks, uttered with the peculiar poetry of diction of the Italians, was balm to me, and my Russian heart beat high with pride and joy.

The same year came the thunderclap of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Aehrenthal had not been idle in the two years during which he was in power. The first finger of the dirty glove that was to be thrown to us had been detached, and smuggled within the vicinity of our toes. I use this ridiculous language advisedly, for the chivalrous "geste" of honestly throwing a glove and taking the consequences of the act, like a gentleman, was not in the nature of this clever, subtle, and dishonest politician. He would always work subterraneously first, and seek some glory in a coup d'Etat afterwards. Now nobody had any serious objection to the annexation in itself. It had long ago been in the nature of a foregone conclusion. But the *method* by which it was done roused the ire

even of Austria's present ally and tyrant—that of Germany. If I remember rightly, after the Bosnian campaign and the temporary occupation, a treaty was signed between Austria, Russia, Germany, and Italy, respecting a future annexation. As a mere matter of formality, the three Powers most concerned in Balkanic affairs were to consult together before the actual annexation took place. Instead of honestly fulfilling these conditions, Austria took a senseless and certainly useless step, and set an accomplished fact before the other Powers concerned. Further, about three weeks before this happened, Aehrenthal came all the way to Rome to assure Tittoni that Austria had entirely given up every idea of annexation. What further lies were offered to the other Powers I do not know, but I know that Italy was in a fine rage. Influential people kept talking to me about it (among others the old Duca della Grazia, who surely could not be accused of being anti-Austrian), and the gist of their words was always: "L'annexion n'est rien par elle-même, mais pourquoi diable nous avoir fait la crasse d'un mensonge, parfaitement inutile, et déshonorant pour l'Autriche? Pour-

quoi ? " [1] Why, indeed ? When I went to Vienna later in the year, the general impression was not unlike that of the glee of naughty children who have successfully tricked a severe governess. A faint uneasiness was perceptible, however, as regards Germany. It appears that " Big Brother " was *very* angry indeed, and about this there was some anxious shaking of heads. Germany published a downright lie, as I happen to know, when she said that *she* had been consulted in secret. Russia behaved with admirable forbearance and cool-headedness in ignoring the insult for the sake of peace. Still, I believe it *was* a shock, and it made people at Petrograd less certain about Austria's good faith. I suppose that Germany was especially furious because Austria, in her stupidity, had prematurely opened our eyes.

It also came to my certain knowledge that the Kaiser at the time rebuked his " dear friend " Francis Ferdinand in violent terms, ending with the words : " I will thank you in future not to rattle *my* sword ! "

[1] " The annexation is nothing in itself, but why on earth should we have been put off with a perfectly useless lie, and one that dishonours Austria ? Why ? "

The whole affair was a deep moral humiliation to Austria, but Aehrenthal was happy. He was created a Count and the Press hailed him as "the Austrian Bismarck"!

I can fancy the sardonic smile of the Germans when the event was mentioned before any of them.

Yes, the "great Aehrenthal" had done his best to realize his dangerous ambition: that of slowly trying to annoy us into declaring war and alienating Germany. (Only he called it, making Austria "independently strong.") Yes, all things considered, I can imagine Germany dancing with rage at the wonderfully brainless move of her ally. For, give the Boche his due, he is not always stupid and he certainly *is* deep! Fancy losing a trick so idiotically, and putting the "Ideal Enemy" upon its guard, even if ever so slightly. For we were far from really awake, as yet, in spite of the trial and subsequent suicide of a highly placed officer in Vienna who was accused, truly or falsely, of spying for us. In the same year, I was startled by hearing some Austrian officers (my nephew among them) say casually: "When we have war with Russia, so-and-so will happen!" So the feeling had spread, it

had penetrated to a wider circle, just as I had feared it would. Yet I could not, *would* not believe that the dawning horror could ever become true.

1909

We passed the autumn of this year in the North of Hungary, with some relations of my husband's. During the yearly autumn manœuvres some officers were quartered in the house. The youngest of them, by birth a Tschech, struck me especially as being both gloomy and "big with a secret," though the behaviour of the elder officers was also strangely nervous. They would not even dine in the castle, for they had constantly to attend to the field telephone, somewhere outside. We were one day walking up and down in the courtyard, after dinner, when I was for an instant left alone with the young lieutenant. I quite innocently asked him what was the matter, as I had seen officers in manœuvre quarters previously and had never seen them in such a state before. On the contrary, they were generally sociable enough.

The young man's face became very grave as

he asked in his turn: "But is it possible, Countess, that you really have no inkling of anything?"

I said "No," but I wanted to know what *was* going on.

"Do you, then, simply believe this all to be a manœuvre?"

I was rather nettled, and said: "Of course I *do*, but if it *isn't*, what in Heaven's name *is* it? If you cannot tell me, you needn't, but then stop hinting."

"Well, madam, you will hear it sooner or later, without a doubt. *It is a secret mobilization against Russia.* The soldiers also believe it to be an ordinary manœuvre, but *we* have been told we may have war any moment. It is the same in the South, where we stand mobilized against Servia and Montenegro. They told us 'there were frontier incidents up north here.' Cossacks are said to have crossed the Galician frontier. But *I* for one know that these are *lies*, to excuse an eventual attack on our part. I have a sister married in Russia. She is in the very frontier town near which the Cossacks are said to have crossed, and she *must* have known it, as her husband is active in the Russian army.

Madam, I am of Slav race, with far more sympathy and belief in Russia than in Austria. Pray for me; for if there *is* a war, I shall have to fight and perhaps die for a cause alien to my heart."

I was thunderstruck! I could neither say a word nor make a movement, until I felt the poor boy take my hand and kiss it. To my further horror, he was actually crying. He was certainly absolutely sober, and I cannot quite understand what made him confide in me, never even asking for my silence (which I kept faithfully to this day, as it could easily have cost him his life had I breathed a word of what I had heard). I subsequently thought he might, besides a sister, have a sweetheart in Russia, to account for the terrible depth of his grief. I lost no time in telling him that my mother had been Russian and that I felt exactly as he did. This seemed to bring him at least the consolation of fellow-feeling. But I myself carried a heart of lead, full of fear and of terror, and was unable to speak to a single soul. Those were days of agony, forever to be remembered, and that went far towards turning my hair grey. My first feeling of relief came when, three weeks

later, the papers announced that "the manœuvres had come to a brilliant and satisfactory end." I concluded that the danger had, at least for the moment, blown over, and I relegated the subject, stupidly enough, to the nightmares that could never become reality.

You who read all this, will you kindly count upon your fingers? It was exactly five years, less a month, before the war actually started. Will any pacifist still have the courage to stand up to me and utter his lukewarm sentiments about "every Power having been in fault, more or less; the sooner we make peace the better," and more stuff like it? Can you still not see how deeply treacherous was the behaviour of the Central Powers? Who *dare* affirm that "they did not want war"? I have shown you one instance of how they were on the qui-vive for a war. There is more to come.

1910

In the month of May of this year my sister was married to an officer in our army, Serge Cantacuzène. I was to have gone to Petro-

grad for the wedding, and it will always be one of my great regrets that I was unable to do so.

I should have come into contact with many leading people, and I could perhaps have helped them if I had opened their eyes. Yet in truth I doubt it. I am sure that, in spite of a sufficiency of signs and warnings, people were still far from seeing the danger clearly enough in Petrograd, as, by the way, in all other Entente countries. I should have been one among the many called mad, and consequently derided. Not that I need ever object to the company, for it contained names like Roberts and Kitchener in England, General Léman in Belgium, etc. Had I gone to Russia, I should certainly have spoken, as the mobilization story was still fresh in my mind. But it was not to be. My mother-in-law fell dangerously ill, and I could not leave my husband, who was like a child in my hands, to give way (under the stress of emotion) to one of his fatal drinking-bouts. Never have I obeyed the marriage law, in its order to cleave to one's husband at the expense of all else, at more personal sacrifice. I had my portrait painted as a wedding-gift to my sister.

For this reason I had to be in Vienna, going up constantly to Grätz, so long as my mother-in-law's life was not in actual danger. In Vienna I met Count Berchthold; for the second time he was to replace Aehrenthal, who had sickened of the illness that was to kill him subsequently, and who now had to relinquish his power, however unwillingly. Berchthold had succeeded him as Ambassador in Russia, and now he was to succeed him as Minister of Foreign Affairs. For some one about to become one of the first men in the Empire, Berchthold was strangely depressed; it was a very generally accepted opinion that he did not like the position into which he was forced: many said he had refused it twice, only accepting finally at the Emperor's personal request.

I can believe it from what I know of him. He was a decent man and no fool, though not strong enough, like Goluchowsky had been, either to turn the current or swim against it. I suppose he felt this and more to wit: that he was soon to become a mere name, a cipher, covering the actions of the true "man at the wheel"; this was a certain Count Forgách, one of Aehrenthal's "creatures"—a tremend-

ous Russophobe, and hating Servia for personal reasons "even unto madness." I heard a lengthy tale, the ins and outs of which I fail to remember, as to how he almost broke his neck at Belgrade, and never forgave the Servians this fiasco. The mention of the authenticated fact may suffice here. By what I personally know of the man, and I know him well—we enjoyed his presence as my father's secretary at The Hague for two mortal years—that is just the sort of feeling he *would* harbour. He was one of the most dangerous men I ever met. He came of a bad stock, too. His father had dishonoured his name in '66, having been connected with a huge army-supplies fraud, of which I do not know the details. His brother had been turned out of every club in the monarchy, it was said for cheating at cards, and in one case for forgery. I am not giving away secrets; this was all common talk. He himself kept within the law; he would in any case have been too clever to do otherwise. But I think him, next to Aehrenthal, responsible for the war.

Berchthold I hold responsible only on account of his weakness. Yet even *had* he been stronger,

could an honourable man ever stand out against a fanatical intriguer, entirely unscrupulous and withal ambitious? Perhaps not! At all events, at the time of his nomination as Minister of Foreign Affairs Berchthold did not wear the air of triumph that might have been expected, and even went so far as to say "he did not care for Aehrenthal's political inheritance."

To return to my affairs, my mother-in-law grew worse and worse, and I left Vienna definitively for Grätz, where my husband needed me. The old lady died a fortnight afterwards, and after the funeral we returned to Venice. Six weeks later my newly married sister came to stay with us, and once more I had the occasion to see how unconscious of danger Russia was. We talked upon all sorts of subjects, my brother-in-law and I, and among other things, he often spoke of how necessary peace was to Russia, and that her only wish was to be left alone, to work out her own salvation through reorganization and internal regeneration. He himself was going to leave the army after his marriage, a thing he would not have been allowed to do, or have dreamt of doing, had any one imagined a war to be pending. He had been brought up in

Petrograd and Paris (his mother is French), and if the Russo-French Entente had been hostile to Germany as she asseverated, it would infallibly have leaked out in his conversation, for, as I said, my brother-in-law, my sister, and myself talked upon every possible subject. And my sister knew my feelings for Russia and all that was Russian, so they had no need to be careful. My husband was quite an anti-militarist, and though during his drinking bouts he was jealous unto madness of my sister and my Russian relatives, and effectually stopped my ever going to see them, in spite of all my efforts, during my married life, yet personally he liked Russia, since he had been there, very much. Another reason for his not allowing me to go to Russia was the fear that in the intimate family life we should lead there his vice would be detected, and that my people, if they found out what a hell my existence really was, would try to separate us. He was probably right in this too.

Well, this only went to prove that apparently in the year 1910 an officer in the Russian army feared no aggression from any quarter, or I must have noticed at least an unnatural reserve. *I* had it upon my lips a thousand times to tell

him the mobilization story of the year before. But the newly-wed couple seemed so happy, I dared not disturb their peace of mind. I often thought in after-years that they might have remarked some constraint in my manner.

1911

The year of the Agadir incident! The whole civilized world was in a turmoil, and trembling on the brink of war! Here was the shock that should have opened the eyes of all of us, and which should have shown us whither things were tending. I will not waste many words about this incident. Volumes have been written about it, and about the subsequent London Conference. Besides, it is so recent that it must still be present to every mind. I will only return to it in my record of the years 1913–14, when I was in Germany, to show how unpopular the peaceful solution had been there, and how the public desire was in the direction of war.

In Italy I heard the loud clamour of different factions, many deploring "the chains of the Triple Alliance." Italy, feeling secure for the

moment from any interference from her "ally in the back," had started her Tripolitanian campaign, accompanied, however, by the growls of the Austrian Press, which again took the tone it had displayed during the Messina disaster. However, these vaticinations were more sharply repressed this time, for the need was felt of renewing the Triple Alliance, that had held in its bonds for a quarter of a century three nations born to misunderstand each other. Germany held Austria in check with an iron hand, for the separatist policy of Aehrenthal and Francis Ferdinand was not at all to her liking. I have reason to believe that the most intimate Austro-German relations were somewhat strained, even until the outbreak of war in 1914.

After what they considered their "defeat" at Agadir, the Germans were not slow to cast covetous eyes in *our* direction, with the disloyal intention of luring us out of the Entente Cordiale. This was manœuvred unknown to Austria, otherwise it would have meant immediate war, resulting in the dismemberment of Austria and ultimately our entire dependence on Germany. It was only a momentary impulse, never really expressed in a practical change

of policy. And we stood loyal to our word, thank God! Our treason, had we consented, would have meant bringing Russia entirely under German rule—and to know the pleasures of that, ask our brother-Poles from Posnania and the Alsatians. But more of this, too, in a later chapter.

1912

The Balkan War! To tell the truth, this was such a nightmare year for me privately, that my sensibilities for world-events were somewhat blunted. I figuratively held my head, asking myself whether I was going mad or not. We left Venice for a God-forsaken place up in the north of Hungary, near Kaschau, in the month of May. It must therefore have been in March or April that the German Emperor came to Venice to meet the King of Italy.

The general opinion was that he came personally to persuade the King to renew the Triple Alliance. He succeeded, as we know, but for the short term of three years only. The wise Italians were not going to bind themselves down for any longer, after the aggressive attitude of their allies in the crisis of Agadir. Had it

not been for the murder of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, they would have calculated the time exactly, the aggression of the Central Powers having been prepared for 1915.

My husband had scarcely arrived in Hungary when he had the worst attack of delirium tremens that I had ever witnessed. It was a complete breakdown, and he narrowly escaped death. For some time after his recovery he used to go to Kaschau to see a doctor. One day he came back woefully agitated (he was still very weak from his recent illness) and told me the following tale. He had come across an old acquaintance, an officer, who was in a great hurry, having just been called up because there was a secret mobilization *against Russia*, and there would probably soon be war. My husband told me to pack, and proposed going to Russia to my sister, a thing he had so far always opposed with might and main. I was surprised about his agitation, and asked him what he would do, once there, if there was war.

"Become a naturalized Russian," he replied, to my great astonishment, "for I know enough of politics to be sure that if Austria is involved in war with Russia it is entirely her fault, nay,

her *crime*!" I had for years felt nothing for my husband but an immense pity. At that moment I almost loved him again, because at least in this he felt as I did. To my sorrow, however, I could not accede to his request, for he was not strong enough to undertake the journey, nor was he in a state to be shown to my family, from whom I had hitherto successfully hidden my misery and his degradation. The thundercloud, too, dissipated quickly this time, and no rumour of manœuvres even got so far as the Press. Soon after this, I and my maid went to Kaschau to do some necessary shopping. To my astonishment, all the stations down the small side-line that led to our place were guarded both by police and soldiers. On meeting our notary next day, I asked him what on earth this display of forces meant. "Oh, madam, as you know, there are rumours about that a war with Russia is coming. The Slavonic part of the population do not like it. They prefer leaving the country. They take the train to some frontier place in Galicia, and then they calmly walk over into Russia—desert, in fact, for that is the last one ever hears about them. Most of them are soldiers in reserve, with their wives and children, or

young boys who would be called up this year. They have no inclination towards a fight with people whom the fools consider their brothers."

This last story of mine you can verify, I suppose. It was in the first days of September, or the last days of August, in 1912. You must know whether many Hungarian Slavs took up their abode in Russia or Poland about that period. Also whether it was a continued stream, or only the effect of a momentary panic. What I have told you is all I know about it.

Well, unlike the war-cloud, my own private thunderstorm materialized and broke over my head. I had to leave my husband, and I meant to divorce him. He followed me, and worked upon my pity till we patched up an attempt at agreement. This brought us to the year 1913, with which I must deal separately.

1918

After my unfortunate husband, quite mad with drink, had attempted to poison me, even the most long-suffering patience seemed to be

of no avail, and my doctor in Vienna, a dear old soul, interfered energetically. I owe him my life, and probably my sanity. He successfully terrorized my husband into letting me go to a sanatorium in Munich; the only place where my husband could not follow me, for the chief doctor had been forewarned.

I accepted this solution with all the more pleasure as my husband had very nice relations living in Munich, of whose sensible help and advice I expected much. Nor was I disappointed. I was treated by them as entirely one of the family, and however hard it must have been for them to side with an alien against one of their own blood, they did what they considered their duty very loyally and unconditionally. It is largely to them that I owed the greater facility of my divorce. Even now, when the war separates as by an unbridgeable gulf, my thankfulness goes out to them, and my love makes an island for them, wherein they dwell apart from the noise and the discord of these troubled times.

Forgive this digression; it was necessary to explain *why* I settled in Germany. Russia was out of the question, as I was far too weak and ill to live through a severe winter there,

and as I was short of money, Munich had the additional advantage of cheapness.

I was struck by the talk of several peaceable elderly people, who were not a little puzzled and nervous because a war tax had been introduced to run for two years. A war tax in the middle of peace-time (at least officially proclaimed as such)—even in Germany it roused murmurs of discontent!

Whilst until now one had always heard: "We have the most glorious army in the world, *why* don't we use it?" the cry had changed into one less bellicose and more anxious: "Why this taxation? Do we really intend going to war?" And they shook their heads somewhat in fear. The monster they had suckled and nursed and adored, seemed, now that he was full grown, less splendid, less entirely glorious to them, viewed close at hand, than he had in the distance. It was only the most rabidly military elements that went on raving like lunatics about "the stain upon Germany's shield since the diplomatic defeat of Agadir," the necessity of "washing off this stain in blood," etc. I have said before that the peaceful ending of this incident had rankled in Germany, and all I heard and saw now proved me right.

The Entente had indeed dared to doubt Germany's absolute right to be first among all nations. They had committed the unpardonable offence of thinking that they too had a word to say. And, in consequence, as Count Münster had predicted, "Germany's sword was ready to fly out of its scabbard." At least it was prepared to do so in 1915. Two years of enormous taxation were to fill the coffers of the State to overflowing, and then would follow "some pretext in the Balkans that Russia *could* not tolerate," as Aehrenthal had said. The further development, according to plans, was an easy victory, because the other nations were asleep.

I see all this *now*, all too clearly, but in 1913 my own tragedy partly blinded me. I, too, was unfortunately asleep, and had my own nightmare to fight: otherwise, gratitude or no, danger to my life or none, I should have gone straight to Russia, and, alive or dead, should be *there now!* My subconscious self alone seemed somehow awake and acting, for I tried to become naturalized as a Russian, even then. Unfortunately this could not be done until my divorce was actually pronounced. Also, it was necessary for me to go and live for a year

in Russia. This was the reply I received at our Embassy in Vienna and our Legation in Munich.

During all the summer of this year, at least once or twice a week, I was awakened by the noise of muffled steps, or artillery rattling by, or an endless stream of cavalry passing in the dead of night. To all my questions I got the reply that it was "night manœuvres." I asked whether it was always so? The answer was: "No; but we all hear we are going to have a war, and one must be ready—prepared." There was, too, a strange depression hanging over the people, especially in the commercial and financial world. There was no general enthusiasm for the "Idea of War," now that one felt the shadows of death actually approaching. That is why Germany *had* and still *has* to lie to her people, and keep them blind to the fact that it was their Government that was the aggressor. It would have been a very disunited Germany indeed, one the military party would have had a difficult task in dealing with, had their eyes been open. But the legend of our aggression was well prepared, as you will soon see.

The feeling of depression in the autumn of 1913 was even more pronounced in Austria,

where talk was less restrained than in the police-regulations bound precincts of Germany. I passed the month of October in Vienna with a Russian cousin who had come to see her doctor there. She and I did a lot of shopping together, and we were struck by the low prices of everything that year. As I spoke the language, I asked here and there for the reason, especially in shops where I used to deal regularly. There was only one answer: "It was better to get rid of things, as every one knew a war was coming before long!" The logic of this was not very clear to me, but I asked on: *War with whom?* The reply was as invariable as the first: "With Russia!" The only slight variation lay in the reason. Some gave none, others this: "that Germany was pressing Austria to it, and Austria was helpless!" Now, not a soul will be able to say that I defend the Germans or their methods, but I wish to be truthful, and must therefore say that this legend, behind which the Austrian Government hoped and still hopes to hide, is a complete and rather cowardly lie. The plot was hatched between the two countries, carried out by them both, and the responsibility lies every bit as much at the door of Austria.

And here, my friends, prepare for a shock, such as I received when, a little later, in November, I returned to Vienna from fetching my furniture and things from Hungary. I met a friend I had known for many years, who had been Aehrenthal's, and at that period was Berchthold's secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was therefore *dans les petits papiers* of all that happened in the way of international politics. He proposed going to a theatre, and afterwards having supper together. I accepted, and we had a nice evening, talking about old times, until about the middle of the supper. Then we started a discussion about his late chief, Aehrenthal, whose death he seemed to deplore very much, and of whose merits he spoke very highly. We promptly found ourselves at opposite poles, as he confessed to a deep admiration for Aehrenthal, whilst I playfully maintained that his wife was the only attraction about him. Then came the thunderbolt:

"Anyhow, he was a very great man, and his ideas have lived after him and will prevail, *for whether Germany helps us now or not, we are ready and quite strong enough to attack Russia by ourselves, and even without Germany*

we are sure to beat her with the left hind leg" (an Austrian slang expression for "with the utmost ease"). "Before two years have passed we are now *certain* of having our war with Russia, and all thanks to Aehrenthal's wisdom!"

I remained numb and dumb. Then I exclaimed: "You *must* be mad!"

"Not at all, not at all; everything is arranged; it will merely be a walk-over, even should Germany hang back."

"Well," I said after another pause, during which horror had held me speechless, "if you really *believe* what you say, I tell you that you *are* mad. You have 'la folie des grandeurs' over here. If ever you attack Russia alone, you may be certain that you can write 'Finis Austriæ' at the same time."

He still went on about the strength of the Austrian army, the disorganization of Russia, the glory of conquering our part of Poland. I had heard enough! I let him talk on. There could be no shadow of a doubt our ruin was resolved upon as the kernel of the Austrian programme. Soon afterwards I retired to bed—not to sleep, however. I kept thinking and thinking, until the whole of my brain felt like an open wound. Finally, with the *idiotic*, incur-

able optimism of one born and bred in peace-time, having gathered her notions of war and what might happen before it only from memoirs and other literature of past ages, I came to a perfectly wrong conclusion. My friend had said: "Even if Germany does not help us," etc. Was it possible there was a serious rupture between the allies? Had Aehrenthal's double policy been doubly successful? It must be so! For the moment I forgot the war tax in Germany, and all I had heard and seen there, to grasp at a last hope.

I remembered a striking incident: the Kaiser's daughter was to marry the only son of the Duke of Cumberland that spring, and the Emperor Nicholas was, as first cousin of the bridegroom, to come to the wedding, accompanied by the Empress-Mother. I will tell you both versions of the tale: On our side, it was said that we had *at last* got wind of the continual armaments and mobilizations of Austria against us, and that the Emperor very properly refused to meet Francis Ferdinand, whom all knew to be the military instigator of this hostility. Austria frankly said that Francis Ferdinand *was afraid* of meeting Nicholas II face to face. "*For what could he find to say*

to him?" Be the truth as it may, the Kaiser, with the choice before him of having his "dear friend" *or* the Emperor of Russia at the wedding, unhesitatingly chose the latter course. He was even said to have had another violent quarrel with Francis Ferdinand! At all events the fact is that Austria was represented at the ceremony by a secondary sort of Archduke, I don't remember which. I should indeed have known better than to pin my hopes to any action, friendly or otherwise, of William II of Germany. I should have realized that this brilliant actor, like Nero, would probably be twice as amiable to a man whose throat he meant to cut. Perhaps, of the knaves answerable for this war, Francis Ferdinand was still the more honest of the two. Hence the quarrel, if quarrel there was. That all was not sweet concord between the two allies is indisputable fact—but how far did the quarrel really go? Of that I am ignorant. How can I forgive myself for my stupid, shortsighted conclusion?—Austria would attack us *alone*, and in that case she was done for; and that left me quite cool, as long as Russia was safe. If she could be so silly, let her ruin herself for all *I* cared! Hungary was more rebellious

at the moment than ever, and I believed her likely to leave Austria in the lurch. Le reste m'était égal ![1]

My excuse must be that I was morally and physically run down—a perfect wreck. Perhaps that made me more apathetic than I should otherwise have been. I found rest in the feeling: "It is *too* awful ever to happen. I have gone through so much, surely I have reached the limit, and this last horror will be spared me."

Well, nothing was spared me, and I learnt the bitter lesson that human endurance is practically limitless.

[1] The rest was indifferent to me.

CHAPTER V

THE EXPLOSION—1914

THE year of terror dawned for me calm, and full of the hope of better things to come. I was glad I had decided to settle in Munich, for my husband's cousins made me feel, for the first time since I had lost my mother, as if I had regained something of a family. No doubt their first impulse was pity for my misery and utter loneliness; but in the course of the last wretched year it had changed into mutual respect and a deep personal friendship.

They were fair representatives of the very best German element of the old school. As they were interested in art of every description—one brother was a very famous painter—I came through them to know all the really great artists that have their abode in Munich.

This pleasant life was first interrupted by a friendly squabble we had concerning the fantastic incident called the "Saverne Affair." I had a

rather interesting glimpse then of the rotten spot that is to be found in every German brain if the possessor thereof has at any time of his life had "the honour to belong to our glorious army." The artist-brother, the women of the family, and I were entirely agreed upon the subject. We all called it a brutal taking advantage of the armed force, vis-à-vis of helpless civilians, and a most useless provocation of national differences better left to sleep. Indeed, the artist-cousin allowed himself to poke gentle fun at the very idea of raising the question of French or German matches to an affair of State. I suppose outside of Germany, too, people know all about the absurd beginning of this whole wantonly provoked scandal. Still, here it is: In the town of Saverne in Alsatia (Zabern in German) there was a café that German officers used to frequent. The proprietor of the place (a placid German, I believe) had one unlucky day placed upon his tables matches of *French* make! This truly terrible crime was magnified into an *insult to the army*. A clearer case of what our French Allies call "chercher midi à quatorze heures"[1] has never in the annals of the world

[1] Looking for noon at four o'clock.

been seen before! In vain did the wretched proprietor protest that the usual matches of German make were sold out and he had only taken the first to hand. He was flung into prison, with all his family. A bragging "Lieutenant," not yet twenty, insulted some civilians who were discussing the event. They had the spirit to protest against his insult, only to be locked up at once. And so the affair grew and grew, until it became a sort of battle between the detested alien military element and the population. The Governor of the Provinces, Count Wedel, a nice old man whom I had known formerly as German Ambassador in Vienna, was accused of laxity, and dispatched from his post with the title of "Prince" applied as a plaster. To a foreign spectator, all this storm in a teapot, all this hubbub about nothing, seemed like a scene from a lunatic asylum. But it was evidently taken seriously enough in Germany, which is significant. The younger of my "cousins-by-courtesy," who had served in the army and retired with the rank of a major, was the only one of *our* artistic set who maintained that the military authorities were *right, that they had not even been severe enough.* We

chaffed him, tried to make him see the absurdity of his point of view—all in vain! Upon this subject he had the attitude of mind that savours of the fixed idea. And this was in daily life a kind and just man; judge, then, what an influence ideas generally propagated in this sense must have upon a man, the slightest bit of a martinet, with ever so little cruelty in him. It is always dangerous to erect any *one* idea as a fetich. In this case, if not stuffed with straw and sawdust, it is filled in with wadding and often supported by stays. Think of the figures of the average German officers you have met! Finally, after no end of fuss, the incident seemed to have blown over, though we were reminded of it when the war broke out, "to prove that France's attitude had always been hostile."

I must not forget to relate that this winter I had met an old friend, and his (to me) new wife—a Dutchman, married to a very pretty American. He had served in the German army, retired upon the event of his marriage, and bought a lovely property near Berlin. Their station was Luther's Wittemberg. His wife and I took a great fancy to each other, and she asked me to come

and stay with them for a month or so in the summer. That is how I eventually found myself in the very heart of the war-vortex—of our enemies.

It was upon a Sunday that the 28th of June fell, and I was dining with my cousins, as on every Sunday. I lived quite close to them, at the corner of the Arcis and Theresienstrasse. To reach their house I had only to cross the gardens of the old Pinakothek. At the next corner from my house, that of the Theresien and Barerstrasse, were the barracks of some regiment or other, and the bulletins were generally stuck upon the wall. I saw the streets black with people, and my curiosity was aroused. Though late, I tried to force my way through the crowd, but being unsuccessful in my efforts, I went straight on to my dinner. In the porch I met my nephew, a boy of seventeen, who had also vainly tried to pierce the crowd. He had only been able to catch some disconnected sentences about "a murder." We both hurried upstairs and told the rest of the family what we had seen. They seemed to be more curious than we had been, for they dispatched the

youth down again to try and find out what had really happened. About half an hour passed, after which he returned and told us the awful news of the murder of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife.

The two brothers at once exclaimed: "Good God, this means a war—unless it is not true, or wildly exaggerated!" As most of our conversation that evening was nothing but guesswork and conjecture about the murder—if true, which we still doubted—it is not worth recording. When the next day brought the confirmation of the shocking news, I drew an entirely erroneous conclusion. My opinion was that perhaps it might still save Austria, and that by the sudden disappearance of the man who worked, lived, and breathed only for war, his party would lose strength and disintegrate, and that a saner policy would take the place of his.

This theory was largely confirmed by all the letters I had from Austria-Hungary about the tragedy, also by the conversations I had with the daughters and the widow of a late Minister of State, who were then staying in Munich, and also with other Austrians there. One and all, after having said or written the

conventional words of horror and regret, added: "But for our country it may mean salvation to have this war-hungry element out of the way. Later on, the succession, too, will be infinitely simplified, for without a doubt he intended *his* issue to reign one day, and that would have meant a civil war, and endless other disorders." You can ask anybody who had correspondents or friends in Austria, about that date, whether they did not hear similar opinions from there, after the tragedy of Serajevo. I put especial value upon this, because, except for the military and the Government party, the majority no more wished for war in Austria-Hungary than in Germany at that time. And it is simply absurd to pretend that a whole nation and its ally went to war because of the murder of a Prince whose death everybody more or less thought a good riddance, who had been hated even by those who out of ambition followed him. And Princip, his murderer, a boy under age, was nothing but a terrible weapon of fatality, no more *really* responsible for the war than a grain of dust in a whirlwind.

It came to my certain knowledge, too, that the Servian Government had warned the

Austrian Government that some uncertain and possibly dangerous elements had gone to Serajevo, and that it would be better for the Archduke to postpone his visit there.

If this is not a sign of good faith and a wish to keep peace, I should like to know what is. More, the Archduke *was* warned in Vienna, was even implored not to go. But, like many other ambitious and arrogant men, he had the redeeming quality of physical courage, besides an obstinacy and captiousness that touched the confines of abnormality. Some one of his immediate entourage often told me, whilst I was at court, that when he wished him to do one thing, he always counselled the opposite course, with the invariable result that the Archduke did what was really wanted of him. The secret of his morganatic marriage with Sophie Chotek had no other foundation. Everybody disapproved, and implored him not to marry her—so of course he did. Had the liaison never been detected, it would have run its course, like many others of his amours before, with far prettier and more fascinating girls, as well, if not better, born than the Chotek.

His own words to the unfortunate burgo-

master of Serajevo show clearly enough why, though able to collect a powerful party by ruling other ambitions through his own, he was so much disliked and feared. It was after the first abortive attempt upon him. Instead of finding a few kindly, comforting words for the poor man, whose heart must have been in his boots from fright and anxiety, he said: "Well, you keep fine order here, I must say. I come for a peaceful visit with my wife, and we get fired at!"

Indeed, in these closing lines of their book of life, he and his intriguing wife show both at their worst and at their best.

At their worst, for her arrogance could not stoop to find a kind word or thought at the last to leave to history. At their best, because, without showing fear, they recrossed the town after the first attack upon them. They once more proved the truth of the saying born during the French Revolution: "Il n'y a pas à dire, ils meurent bien les aristos!"[1]

At once, after the assassination, I began to fear my cousins would be right in their prophecy of war. The Austrian Press started a vile

[1] "There's no doubt about it, these aristocrats do die well."

campaign against us, saying that "this murder clearly showed the black hand of Russia." Princip (who incidentally was an Austrian subject, of Servian nationality) was hysterically magnified into a Russian agent of the blackest dye. One did not for an instant consider or attempt to tell the truth, namely, that an over-excited boy, with other mere boys, like himself, excited by the very real sufferings of his people at the hand of Austria, chose this criminal and hopeless way of (as he imagined) setting things right. It must have been pretty clear to every Servian and Montenegrin that Austria meant to swallow them, sooner or later, and had only been held in check heretofore by Russia and Italy. I believe every *honest* diplomat who has been in the Balkans during the last ten years will agree with me in this.

But once more the Press was silenced, *after* it had done its work of agitation.

In general, what struck one most was the all-pervading silence. Had Austria for once been straightforward, had she indeed had reason to believe that Russia had a hand in this dastardly crime, why did she not declare it a *casus-belli* at once? Was no one but myself struck

by the *time* they took in, let us say, realizing that they had been offended? *It took them almost four weeks to do so*, though they had caught the murderer red-handed and he frankly declared having no other confederates but those caught with him. Stay, I believe there was one other, also a mere boy. Princip was not even hanged, and surely Austria was never before backward in hanging? His youth was much talked about. Indeed, I believe he is still overcoming that defect in an Austrian prison.

What passed in those four weeks between Berlin and Vienna? Who will ever know the absolute truth of it? To show you how completely things had apparently calmed down, I left without a qualm for my visit to the country, and had arranged for my next one, to my cousins' place. Even journalists had exhausted the Francis Ferdinand subject. He had become to all intents and purposes as uninteresting and as dead as a door-nail. The unanimous feeling seemed to be, especially in court circles, that his death was a blessing in disguise, as it did away with the much discussed succession question. Now, when the war broke out, I and several other people had a theory which seems confirmed by what ultimately hap-

pened. But you must examine it coolly, and not exclaim at its madness. It is this: Neither Austria nor Germany was as yet *quite* as ready as she meant to be before attacking us, in spite of all their talk. A year, perhaps more, of the war taxes was still due, before the financial position was as secure as they wished it to be.

The coup had been decided for the year 1915, if not '16. The Emperor of Germany, if chiefly a clever and versatile comedian, is sly and cautious too, and would have preferred to be entirely ready. The Emperor of Austria, or his counsellors, imagined that Russia was so absolutely unready that they could eat up Servia before she was able to interfere seriously. And they considered the opportunity too good to be lost. Now, I honestly think that the Kaiser *tried* to keep Austria back, if only temporarily, for a year or so, believing this to be the safer course.

He was under the delusion that he had succeeded, and went off for the famous cruise that is always brought forward by the German Press as a sure proof of his being innocent in the making of war. But he forgot some one at home—namely, his precious son. In court

circles it was known that he had "gone to pray at the tomb of the murdered Archduke" as soon as "Papa" had left Berlin.

I can imagine those prayers! The inheritor of all the vices, but of none of the intelligence of his father, the hope and the idol of the military party in Germany, especially of its younger and more hot-headed members, the Kronprinz was not much less disliked generally than Francis Ferdinand had been, and hoped to rise, like him, to instant popularity, fame, and greatness, at the expense of his father, by making a coup d'Etat. He was greatly helped thereto by the ambitious folly of Austria. The quarrels between father and son are almost an historical tradition in the House of Hohenzollern. William II and his son make no exception to this rule. I may have been wrong, so may the others have been in Germany who thought as I did. But it is at least a theory wherewith to explain the meteoric promptitude with which Austria adopted a warlike attitude towards Servia while the Kaiser's back was turned—the impossible ultimatum, written and composed by Count Forgách; the sudden return to Berlin of the Kaiser, who came only to find that things had pro-

gressed beyond his control. Before the war-hysteria had spread to everybody, many people talked sotto-voce about the Kronprinz and his party, saying, not without bitterness, that at least *he* would be pleased if war actually broke out. Everybody will admit that the Jewish haute-finance is usually well-informed as to possible events. My hostess, being American, had interests other than purely German, and as soon as the threatening ultimatum became known, she at once called up a Jewish financier on the telephone to find out whether there was more likelihood of war or peace. Besides, her husband would be called up on the second day of the mobilization, and it was very much to their interest to be kept informed. Their banker friend promised to let them know as soon as he himself knew anything for certain. It all depended upon whether Servia accepted the ultimatum or not. This was about lunch-time. At seven o'clock the telephone rang. My hostess ran to take up the receiver. I followed her, and anxiously watched her face. It became gradually radiant as I heard her say: "Thank God, no war! —no, no; of course not." Then some words of thanks, and she turned to me, hanging up

the receiver: "My friend tells me that Servia has accepted almost all the conditions imposed upon her by Austria, and *that unless we on our side want a war*, which is too absurd an idea to entertain even for a moment, *there can be no reason for a war at all. And this is the opinion of all the finance.*"

How does it strike you? Does it not seem to you that Germany stands condemned out of her own mouth?

I still remember vividly how gay we all were that evening. My host even ordered champagne for dinner, and we drank "To Peace!" Oh irony! Next morning, the 24th of July, the papers were full of "the impossibility of Austria's being content with the *modified* acceptance of the ultimatum by Servia." "Her honour was too deeply involved," etc., etc., *ad nauseam*! With rage burning hot within me, I repeated violently to myself: "*Fudge!*—a thousand times, *Fudge!* If they had said *dis*-honour, that would have been nearer the truth—their dishonour in plotting and scheming for twenty years or more." Everything came back to me then, and the truth stood revealed to me by the lightning flash of memory. The speeches of Staal, Welsersheimb, Münster, Stead,

Pauncefote, Aehrenthal and his secretary, all came back, and I saw the events predicted rushing towards their inevitable accomplishment.

Germany and Austria declared the "partial mobilization" upon the 26th. We went to Berlin that same day, and lunched at the Automobile Club with the brother of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Police-President von Jagow, and the Austrian chargé d'affaires.

Many words were wasted about a mobilization not meaning *war*. And there, too, I heard a thing that made me gasp. Two hundred and fifty thousand men were *already* standing on the confines of Belgium, "just far enough from the frontier not to be suspected." For "one could not repeat the mistake of 1870 in sparing Belgium." New plans were made to attack France from two sides at once. "It was a *necessity of war!*"

France?—was I dreaming? Belgium?—had I not understood that all the Powers had signed a treaty to protect her neutrality? Had *I* gone mad?—no, no; I was at last sane, getting saner every minute! At last my eyes were completely opened to the hideous truth, only all too clearly.

Men whose names I failed to catch, in the

hubbub of talk and the hurry of introductions, but certainly of some importance and apparently well-informed, talked with the men of our party—talked criminal talk as if it were their daily bread; and so I had a sudden and complete insight into the plot of death and ruin, as contrived by Germany and Austria. I saw it in all its naked horror—yes, and in all its shortsighted stupidity too. Briefly, it was to be war with France and Russia. Even here I wish to be just. Jagow said that he and his brother still hoped the disaster could be averted. Whether he meant what he said is another question. And my host said the same. They were called fools by some others, when, "endlich," the occasion seemed so fine. Jagow also said, dolefully enough, that his one fear was that the military party would never let pass such a beautiful pretext "zum losschlagen" (to hit out).

A great discussion arose about England. I heard my own voice, as if it came through a gramophone, from a long distance: "If you have war with France and Russia, you will have England to reckon with, also. She also is one of the Triple Entente." I was told I was talking "Unsinn" (nonsense). And

England got such an avalanche of the foulest abuse as made me hope she *would* go to war, if for nothing else, at least to throw the Germans' contempt of her back into their teeth and show them her true worth! I was asked: "When had England ever been true to her word? Could I not remember the Crimea, the Boer War, the Sudan Campaign?" England was cowardly, greedy, treacherous, and in this instance would let all the nations fight and make her profits out of them.

I retorted that all the wars they had mentioned did not, to my understanding, carry the logical sequence that England was *afraid* to fight. But as an answer I only got the following astounding announcement: "We need not discuss the thing any further! *We* are at all events perfectly assured that England will maintain a friendly neutrality towards us. She won't ever dare to draw her sword against *us!*" "And Belgium?" I ventured to ask further. "Oh, Belgium will let us pass through! Is not her King of German origin, and the Queen also? And *if* not, if they should prove traitors (?), of course we have our army at her door! What can she offer in the way of resistance? Everything is foreseen, as you

see! Italy will keep the French navy in check, and engage part of the French army in Savoy. We do not count upon the Italian army as a serious asset—it is quite wretched; but, thank God, her navy is good! Russia has not one army corps in proper fighting order, and Austria can settle Servia before the Russians need be taken into account" (just as I thought!). This last insult made me return with asperity that they were probably mistaken; I could not accept that Russia would be so disorganized as all that. I was told in reply: "What do you expect? In Russia everybody is a thief, from the Grand Dukes to the meanest soldier. They have neither discipline nor guns, and a disorganized mass is mere cannon-fodder—the more the merrier!" I disagreed more strongly still, but, on second thoughts, I was silent in order to hear more. I could anyhow not stop their disgusting talk; as well hear them out. They were all agreed on these points: that England, come what might, would *never* move; that Italy would —on their side, of course. The whole war would last but three months or so, at the end of which Germany would dictate peace in Paris and Petrograd. About Russia they had a catch-

word: "Russia must be beaten first and exploited afterwards!" And: "What a tremendous field for our energy and industry, lying right at our doors. We can double and treble our riches at their expense, for they are great fools, entirely unable to govern or to make their land pay!"

Take this well to heart, you "great fools" who would fraternize with your neighbours! I tell you that they are "great knaves." "Russia must be beaten first and exploited afterwards." How do you like hearing this? What particle of gain do you imagine would be yours if you were at the mercy of these sharks? Cannot you find the courage and the decision to reverse the German motto: "Beat them first, and exploit them afterwards"? Not that *I* would ever recommend the latter course! You might find yourselves persuaded away from your homes before you knew where you were. The Boche, unless kept well in order, is always a dangerous variety of the human animal. In those early days there was not a particle of doubt that they considered the question of war or peace to be *entirely* in their own hands. They were frankly aggressive, and ad-

mitted as much, if only tacitly. The jeremiad of *their* having been attacked was only served up later in order to fool and frighten their people into believing themselves in danger. And in this they were surpassingly clever and successful.

After a while, the men who had congregated round our table left one by one, and our original party remained. My silence must have struck them, because the Austrian chargé d'affaires, who had been an old friend of ours, turned to me and said: "Well, Madame Olga, what do you think?—you are so very quiet." Again I felt as if my voice were outside of myself, as I replied: "Since you ask me, this: Russia is *not* so dead as you imagine; England will join the Entente, especially if you fall upon Belgium; and lastly, if you can keep Italy *even neutral* to the end you will be lucky indeed!" I was laughed at, as I knew I should be. Finally we broke up the party, whilst everybody seemed to repeat, in an absurd chorus, that a mobilization did not mean war as yet!

For a few fleeting days I had hoped much from the attitude of my own country, Hungary.

There were rumours as to her dislike of the turn of events. The late Archduke had been, if possible, more detested in Hungary even than in any other part of the monarchy.

I hoped that her constant affirmations of independence were no mere empty cries, like those of ever dissatisfied children, but that in this medley of affairs she would really see to her own interests, and declare herself independent of the machinations of her old enemy, Austria, who had, without consulting her, made such havoc of their common affairs.

But no! The war-hysteria, the legend of having been attacked, made as much of a fool of Hungary as of the other nations. Completely blinded, she was going to shed her blood again, for the hundredth time, in the cause of a country ever unjust, ever ungrateful to her. It was then I resolved to change my nationality. I, for one, could not change my political convictions with every breath of wind. I remained as I had always been, whilst everybody around me had gone crazy. It *is* a disappointment to lose faith in, and respect for, a country that has been yours. For whilst I always *have* loathed Austria, and, with a few exceptions, the Austrians, I at

least believed in, and loved, the independent spirit and the pride of nationality in Hungary. But if they chose to become willing slaves, that was *their* affair! I have neither the mentality nor the temperament of a slave. What I feel I feel, what I say I say, and as I *must* act I act! I said a sad good-bye to Hungary in my soul, for it was *my* Hungary no longer!

You all know how after the 26th of July things went at a gallop. France, and Russia also, partially mobilized. The proposal to mediate between Austria, Russia, and Servia, made by England, France, and Italy—to lay the matter in question before a court of arbitration—every peaceful means, was refused by *Germany on Austria's behalf*. And surely this should make one think! Austria had no longer voice in the matter, apparently. The terms, too, in which Germany clothed her expression of tutelage were ridiculous enough: "Our ally *cannot so far debase herself* (?) as to submit to a mediation which would interfere with her national pride and independence (?)," etc.

Then came the impossible demand of the

Kaiser that *we* should demobilize, whilst *they* did not. On the contrary, they ordered the general mobilization before our answer ever came. The last telegram of Tsar Nicholas to the Kaiser, in which he implored him to stop and think before causing a world-disaster, was, as we all know now, suppressed. The German people, except those living in a neutral State, know nothing of it to this day. The ultimatum to Belgium, her proud refusal to tread the path of dishonour, the invasion that followed at once; a new declaration of war following every day—all this is matter for history, and is written down in the Blue book, the Orange book, and books of every hue of the rainbow. What is less well known, but rather amusing, is that so certain were the Germans that Albion was going to live up to her "tradition of perfidy," that a day or so before her declaration of war the Germans still considered the English their "dear brothers," and enthusiastic popular manifestations took place before the British Embassy. I have often wondered what the feeling of Sir Edward Goschen must have been. He must have had the declaration of war practically in his pocket! It appears that the same thing happened in

front of the Japanese Embassy, so sure were the Germans that Japan would side with them. Bedlam was let loose. I felt, in my antagonism, as if I were the only sane person in a gigantic madhouse. During a week or so, I studied the following distinct phases in the Press. Phase one was: Servia the blackest sheep there ever was among the nations, the veriest criminal, for had *she* not set everybody by the ears and caused this awful war? etc.

Next, the refusal of the Tsar to demobilize, if Germany and Austria did not, was construed into a hostile act. But in order to make still surer, an "invasion" on our side was promptly invented. I quote textually: "The Russians were in such a hurry to fall upon us that they did not even wait for a formal declaration of war, but have already begun hostilities by passing our northern frontier and thus desecrating the holy precincts of our Fatherland. Needless to say that these barbarians committed horrible outrages, murdering helpless women and children (?), burning down houses," etc. "Germans! your hearts must be filled with righteous indignation against so vile a foe. However peaceful our Government (?)

our nation, we must punish this treason and defend our right," etc.

For quite twenty-four hours we were much blacker than any devil was ever painted, and *ours exclusively* was the fault of this war. Servia became merely a child, misled by us.

Then came the turn of France! A French invasion in Alsace was invented, to inflame the popular hatred against France. It was much upon the same lines as the diatribe against us. Still, let me quote something of it: "The policy of a Government without the shadow of a conscience, after having for forty years encouraged a criminal wish for revenge against the best, the friendliest of neighbours (?), has to-day signed France's doom. It was not for nothing that she allied herself to the most bloodthirsty Power in Europe [that was poor Russia], *and as a supreme insult* to us chose an Alsatian President (?). This should have been a warning to us. *It was nothing short of a declaration of war in itself*, had we but rightly understood it," etc. Can you, in your sober senses, believe that upon such foundations was built what they called "France's responsibility for the war"? Can you believe that such nonsense should have

been written, and actually believed by an entire people? It sounds incredible, yet so it was. Yesterday Russia had been an image of pitch; to-day we became merely a dark-grey accessory, and France had its turn of black infamy. Next came Belgium: "Having for years plotted and schemed with our enemies *to aggrandize herself at our expense*, having sold her honour to those who hated us (?), Belgium must be made responsible for the outbreak of this terrible war," etc. I will spare you more of this idiocy.

Upon the 4th of August, immediately after the violation of Belgian neutrality by the German invasion, England also declared war upon Germany. If it gives you any pleasure, dear countrymen, I can tell you that after this event we all became but faintly grey. *Here* was the archfiend that had instigated the whole thing! At last he had unmasked and shown his hideous face, bent upon the destruction of mankind. The others were merely his instruments, etc. When I meekly remarked that it seemed to me most unfair to accuse England of any belligerent propensities or intentions—a land whose available army, reserves and all, was barely 150,000

men, who had steadily refused to pass the law of compulsory service, etc.—I was almost torn to pieces, and, as I stuck to my guns in face of their absurdity, I got no further answer but furious and rather forced "Ha-ha-ha's!" I asked how they reconciled their present statement with their *certitude* that England would remain neutral. But they turned their back upon me, vouchsafing no further explanation.

Well, England has remained their "pet foe" until this day, and you owe her deep respect for this. She must be very strong and very loyal thus to merit *their* boundless hatred. Even in those nightmare days, when I heard and read about nothing but disasters, except for a few successes on *our* side, my sense of humour remained faintly alive, and I sometimes managed a wan smile when I read articles with headlines like these: BRUDERMORD. (An article expressive both of hatred and sentimentality, as to how the Germans and the English were in fact brothers, and how this war was a fearful crime perpetrated by the perfidious English brother against the poor, innocent, unsuspecting German. H. S. Chamberlain was quoted *in extenso*, of course, and history from the time of our Father

Adam served up to us.) The next article went even further; it was headed: CARTHAGO. This was mania, pure and unadulterated: England would be entirely destroyed, so that not one stone would remain upon the other, by the invasion of a "saner, younger, and healthier Kultur," as represented by "our fine lads in grey." But the conquerors, after having achieved their object, would turn their backs upon a soil that had been capable of breeding such a treacherous race—it *must* be poisonous! And in ten years from that day nothing would remain of all that people had called "mighty Albion" but a waste of sandy dunes. No living creature would remain, but the seagull might moan in vain over the "verfluchte Insel" (damned island). Had this not been the case of Carthage?—why not even so with England!

Here I make no comment, and I will spare you further quotations from the Hun Press, unless absolutely necessary.

Two of my prophecies had come true: the one about England and the one about Italy, who, never having signed a treaty for aggression, now remained neutral. No abuse was allowed in the Press concerning this latter

development. But it was loud and violent enough privately.

In general the word "treason" flew about in those days, like a poisonous fly, to settle upon all and sundry who "had prevented Germany from taking her rightful place in the sun" (whatever that might be).

That Germany wished to undertake the rôle of the moon during a total eclipse was but a small detail, unworthy of the attention of the "children of Kultur"! Why, we might all have sworn (like so many wives) to love, cherish, and obey Germany and her War-Lord until death us did part, and then have marched away under their noses with a negro minstrel, for all the "betrayed-husband wails and howls" that would rend the air in consequence.

You will notice that I have said little of Austria. One reason is that I was not there; the second, that as soon as she had attacked Servia and war was generally declared, she at once sank into secondary importance. I even believe she at last realized her awkward position and tried, too late, to back out of it. Be that as it may, her declaration of war followed later, and our Ambassador remained in Vienna, and en pourparlers, I think *a*

week after all the other Allied Embassies were empty.

For the first month of the war I was obliged to remain in the country, because no train took civilians. I shall all my life look back upon that time as upon a monstrous nightmare. My friend, though an American, and in truth married to a Dutchman by birth, was the most rabid German I ever came across. She either could or would not see reason. I was very fond of her, and terribly sorry for her, too. She adored her husband, and he was gone to the war. I tried my best to comfort her, but I am afraid it was a failure, because my heart was too desperately sad, and too entirely with the other cause. At first I tried to speak in defence of Russia, about whom I knew all too well that this war was none of her making or wishing. But it upset her so much that I was forced into silence at last. I think it can be put down to the credit of both of us that we never had a quarrel, and that each respected the other's feeling sufficiently to avoid touching on dangerous subjects.

One other fond illusion of the Germans was that America was entirely, heart and soul,

upon their side. I knew nothing to the contrary, and so was filled with fear at these views. You must remember I saw nothing but German newspapers, so America must forgive my doubt of her. These fears of mine were set at rest sooner than I hoped, as I will show a little later.

During this time of moral pain and stress, I could at least study at my leisure the aforesaid cleverness of the German Press in hoodwinking its readers entirely. Its task was an easy one, so far as announcing victories was concerned. It is not difficult for two men, armed to the teeth, to be victorious over ever so many children, armed with popguns. That was practically the measure of it, at the beginning. We were many upon paper, but our armaments were so inferior as to reduce the proportion to this figure. If nothing else will convince the doubters, this should. Who is *likely* to become an aggressor?—the man who is entirely prepared or the one that is not? To have *wished* for a war, and *begun* it, on our side would have been a suicidal idea, for Russia, if not *as* disorganized as the Germans believed, was yet sufficiently so to render an aggression on her part a very dangerous

folly; France and Belgium were unable even to defend their frontiers, and England had nothing better in the way of help than her "contemptible little army." Even the blindest must realize that our efforts towards war lie within the period of the war itself, and are therefore a purely defensive measure.

But to return to the German Press. It was *utterly vile* in this, that it made all Germany's enemies out to be cravens. My blood boiled when I read that Russians, English, and French "all took to their heels or surrendered as soon as the Germans but showed themselves," etc. Not that I ever believed a word of it. But it was very clever in other things. For instance: *not* to publish *any* of the enemies' communiqués would have been dangerous, because even the police-ridden Teutons might have begun to think, which was the one thing they were expected never to do. So a really brilliant device was found. Upon one side, under perfectly gigantic headlines, their victories were recorded. Upon the other side, under a headline no less enormous, stood our communiqués, as I believe, fully given, omitting only the tremendous losses sustained by the Germans. The genius lay in the wording

of the headline: "Die fremden Lügenberichte" (the foreign lies). Reassured beforehand as to the fact that *all* he would read under that heading was untrue, where lay the danger in publishing it? I do not say that this would answer with every nation—indeed, I greatly doubt it. But the German is so drilled into believing anything that his Government and its organ, the Press, wish him to believe, that the idea of thinking independently for himself does not enter his thick head. As to personally comparing and weighing events, that is a thing he has forgotten, under the rule of the Hohenzollern and his goosestep. But the adroitness of the Press went further still. They were up against the two greatest democracies in Europe: England and France. The latter was of course not spared! It was a Republic, therefore its President could be described with impunity as an unmitigated blackguard. But this was not the case with England and Russia. If the King and the Emperor were even slightly blamed, it *might* make a few astonishingly independent and enterprising spirits think: "And our Kaiser? And old Francis Joseph? *They* are monarchs too. Might it not be *just* pos-

sible that they also were not free from the taint of wishing to enlarge their sphere of domination ?" No ! that would never do ! And so the following two legends were invented : the Tsar, a peace-loving man, protesting against war, suddenly found himself surrounded by an armed force sent by the military party (?), and constrained at the point of the bayonet to sign the declaration of war !

As to the King of England, he was a mere puppet in the hands of evil counsellors, the worst among them being Sir Edward Grey. This latter bore the brunt of the foul and dastardly abuse, whilst Lord Kitchener had his share. As I have showed, they defended, even in their enemies, the principle of "Gottesgnadenthum" (by the grace of God), this corner stone of the monarchical principle : "The king can do no wrong." The inference is clear : in whitewashing as far as possible the sovereigns of enemy countries, they shut the door to criticism of their own feudal system of mediæval severity.

I cannot tell you the exact date of my departure from the country. I only know it

was upon the day that the news of the disaster of Tannenberg reached Berlin.

I said good-bye to my kind hostess, and went to the capital on my way to Munich. An unimaginable journey! In ordinary times it took less than an hour to reach Berlin, now it took six. Every compartment was crowded with officers and soldiers, and as German politeness has its limits, my maid and I stood for quite a long while in the corridor, until, in fact, she requested an officer to give me his place, as I was delicate and felt faint. At last I had a seat, but was put through a regular series of interrogations: "Madame, you do not look German: may we ask where you come from?"

"Do you wish to see my passport?" I inquired.

"If we may."

I handed it over.

"Ah! A Hungarian—an ally then?"

"I suppose so."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean what I say. I suppose I must pass for an ally, being a Hungarian, but this war having none of my sympathies, I am afraid I am not really one."

"Ah! A fair pacifist then," with a sneer.

"If you choose to call it so."

Thereupon they became confidential: pacifism was "Unsinn" (nonsense); a fine, splendid war like the present one, that was *life.*

"Unless it is death," I retorted grimly.

"Well, well," they said, with a pitying smile, "women must have fancies." Then, looking my figure up and down, in the peculiarly insulting way they have in Germany and Austria, they added: "For of course, madame, you have no children."

I happen to be slight, and the idea that a woman must become a shapeless bundle when she has had children is a deeply ingrained conviction of the Teuton male, generally borne out, it is true, by their womenkind. I replied "No" as shortly as I could.

Having, with wonderful insight, satisfactorily set me dowr in the category of childless females (therefore harmless lunatics or hobbyists), they became communicative. It was enlightening to hear them talk. Most of the conversation can be put into a single sentence that came back as a refrain: "One must say, we have managed this affair very neatly!" (Nett eingefädelt")—meaning the forcing of this

turning my passport over to my maid and leaving her to make all further arrangements. I need not have hurried so. Even before I reached the table, where all the evening papers were spread out, I could see the enormous headlines: "Hindenburg's tremendous Victory in the East," "The Battle of Tannenberg," "80,000 Prisoners, the rest drowned in the Marshes," "Every Guards Regiment annihilated."

I am not in the habit of fainting, but at that instant the world went round before me, and I blindly caught hold of a column near by, or I should have fallen.

I sat down finally, staring straight before me. If I had never known my heart before, without a doubt I knew it then. Every particle of me was torn by a pain I had never felt before. I do not know how long I sat there. My maid apparently grew alarmed and came to fetch me. Anyhow, I *had* to pull myself together. I must go to the Austrian Embassy, to have my passport viséd. I dragged myself to the telephone and called up the chargé d'affaires. Luckily he was in, and I took a carriage and drove there.

In moments of great soul-torture one has a sort of numb, mechanical force—one does

things correctly, but in later years cannot imagine how one ever did them. I saw my man, and formalities being dispatched, we arranged to dine together. *Anything* would be better than sitting alone in a hotel room and brooding miserably. Solitude can be borne, may even be desirable, in one's own house, or out somewhere in the midst of nature. But in a hotel room! No!

I felt more in sympathy with him, too, because all the conceit of his earlier days seemed to have gone out of him. I told him that all my men in Russia were in the Guards, and that the news of the battle of Tannenberg had given me an awful shock. I could not very well explain to him that I felt it so dreadfully for a far bigger reason than only a family one.

He was kind. He told me that reported enemy losses were generally grossly exaggerated. He promised to send a letter to my sister, via Denmark, for me, if I would write it in his presence. I did so. Poor woman, what could I tell her, thus constrained, of my *real* feelings? I could only repeat that I loved her more than ever, and trust to her knowledge of me to understand the rest.

It makes me shiver even now to recall those days. Whilst we had had this dreadful disaster in East Prussia, we had some successes in Galicia. That was why my friend at the Embassy was not quite himself. He seemed serious and rather depressed. He said: "If only we can manage to push back the Russians beyond our frontiers! You see, I have become modest. For if *not*, it will be used by the Germans as a pretext to come and help us, and you know what they are. Once there, we shall never see their backs again, and that will be the end of *us*! You can get rid of lice more easily than of Germans, once they start bossing you" (Man wird eher noch Läuse los, als die Deutscher, wenn sie einem im Genick sitzen)—I refrained from saying "I told you so" when he further added that he, for his part, wished Austria well out of it. Then he cheered up again, and said: "Bah! nonsense! I am depressed. We *must* be victorious, and if we are, even the Germans will owe us so much thanks that it will humanize them."

"You are mistaken—they are disappointed in you as it is," was my parting shot.

Our dinner was not destined to take place.

I was called up on the telephone by my friend to tell me that an unexpected rush of work kept him at the Embassy until it was too late for dinner. I went down to the restaurant by myself. I was not sorry, for it was, by mere chance, a most interesting experience. I let the waiter place me anywhere, and I ordered the shortest menu possible, yet it was an endless meal. (Not that it seemed so to me.) Chivalry certainly does not extend to waiters, my experience as a "lone female" being that luncheon usually lasts an hour and a half, and a dinner anything over two hours, in spite of generous tips by way of persuasion. My seat happened to be next to a couple of officers of high rank, evidently connected with the War Office, for an orderly brought them telegrams or notes every quarter of an hour or so, yelling "Dienst, Dienst!" (Service, service) as he went.

I heard them ask the waiter quite loudly who I was:

"Who is that woman?—she does not look German."

Whilst mentally ejaculating "Thank God!" I was angered at their rudeness. As my passport had to be shown to the manager upon coming to

the hotel, and I was at once registered, I soon heard my names and dignities poured into the ears of these little War-Lords. Evidently reassured, they started: "That damned Russia, that thrice-damned Austria." (I pricked up my ears. They talked so loud I could anyhow not help overhearing what they said, and their rudeness became doubly insulting, as they knew my name now, and had every certitude that, being a Hungarian, they were swearing at what *they* must believe to be my country.) "It was 'verflucht' [damnable] that Pourtalès [the German Ambassador at Petrograd] had been so badly informed. It had been generally believed that Russia was upon her last legs, and here she was, with not only an enormous force, but quite decent guns too. True, she was badly defeated at Tannenberg, but we hear now she has endless resources, and our own losses were very severe also. For we can indeed *print* stories about their cowardice, but that does not make them true! They fight like devils—devils—all of them!"

Then the other man began: "Devils or no, we shall have to beat them, conquer their land by fair means or foul. It is an impor-

tant economic necessity for Germany to spread over Poland, the Baltic Provinces, and generally exploit Russia" (ein wichtiger Lebensbelang).

"Talking of Poland," resumed the first speaker, "Austria will never let us have it our own way *there!*"

"Austria be damned," snarled the first speaker; "I said so once already. Should she interfere, we should break her head for it. She has cheated us, anyhow, as to her *real* force in the field. If I make no mistake, the Russians will be in Lemberg before a fortnight [he was quite right in this prophecy, by the way]. To think that we—*we*—have been such unspeakable idiots as to be fooled by *her*. For the last ten years she actually made us believe her army was as good as ours! Pfui! I wish we had an alliance with Russia instead! The cannon-fodder is good [meaning the soldiers]—even their officers are not bad, if there were only more of them. Under *our* command they would do wonders! Well, it will come to that, once they are well beaten! They will make useful slaves. Slavs are anyhow slaves born; there is only a letter's difference between the two words" (in

German: Slaven sind doch geborene Sclaven; es ist nur ein Buchstaben unterschied im Wort).

Then the other started again: "Talk about Pourtalès! but Lichnowsky [the German Ambassador at London] was even more of a fool not to have reported that we had to reckon with England. Not that England will ever be of any serious importance. We can easily smash her miserable little army, and at the first reverse she will fall to pieces. India, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Egypt, will all be lost to her, and she will be nothing but a wretched little island shivering in the North Sea!"

This was the gist of their conversation, often interrupted, as I said before, by telegrams from the War Office, calls to the telephone, etc. I was just paying my bill as my friend of the Austrian Embassy made a tardy appearance. He bowed to the men at the next table. I got up, and we sauntered out. I had meant to ask him who those officers were, but refrained, for I should have got into very hot water had he told them what my real sympathies were. He found it out, of course, because he asked me a straight question, to which I gave an equally straight answer. In

general, I take some pride in the fact that, though it was manifestly dangerous to do so, when asked, I always answered truthfully. I often kept silent when not questioned, but that is another matter. Surrounded by nothing but enemies, in the political sense at least, I stuck to my guns in saying that my heart was in Russia, and that I hoped and believed in the victory of the Entente.

It was probably lucky for me that the Germans were so self-satisfied and so cocksure that they did not believe me. I was often told I had only taken up this attitude out of "pose."

At all events, if this book ever sees daylight, and if any of my acquaintances or friends on the other side should ever read it, they cannot convict *me* of treason (though they will, no doubt, accuse me of it). All my life I have stood firm in my defence of Russia; and no personal danger made me shift or waver, war or no war!

I had to stay three days in Berlin, for no train taking civilians went South before that. Dreadful days they were! I woke one morning to the shouts of the populace. I looked

out, and saw the first prisoners I had ever perceived—from *our* front! A few captured cannon followed. Every street was lined. The poor, miserable prisoners, in the midst of their jeering, hooting, laughing, insulting enemies, stumbled along, dusty and footsore, prodded in the back by their captors' bayonets. I have never been much given to tears. My life had been so hard that, by the unanimous verdict of the doctors, it would have landed most people in a madhouse. Yet I can never remember a tendency towards hysteria before. But at this instant I fell on my knees near the window, overwhelmed by such a frenzy of pain that I stuffed the curtains into my mouth to strangle the shrieks that rose to my lips. I can only remember that I uttered wild and incoherent prayers—that God should grant us *revenge*! —that all their vile plottings and schemings, all their cruelty, should be paid back to them in full; that in the end, at least, the victory should be *ours*!

A knock at the door roused me. The mask had to be resumed, the armour buckled on. It was my maid. I shall always be grateful to her for her silence and tact in those try-

ing days. Though herself a Moravian, she never spoke a word that could hurt me. More, when she heard the Russians abused, she silenced the speakers by saying: "They are *not* wicked. I have been with a Russian lady [my mother], and know other Russians too: they were the kindest people I ever came across." Poor, faithful old thing! We are parted now, but I shall always be grateful to her for her generous behaviour.

I wish to say something about a general impression I received in Berlin. I hope never to go any nearer to hell than the foretaste I received of it there! I cannot ever hope to explain satisfactorily the distinct and violent sensation of all-pervading evil that hung above the German capital in those days. One felt it clearly; it was everywhere. Berlin seemed the very centre where hell was let loose, and where every evil emotion of man was concentrated. The populace's joy was drenched in hate! When the bulletins were posted up, giving the number of prisoners taken, vindictive shrieks of delight went up. What was the cry? "*Hurrah, we can let them all starve; they are at our mercy!*" Moreover, it was not *one* voice that uttered this monstrous

cry of triumph! No, it was the entire mass, the whole of the people. It was their joint voices that made this horrible clamour.

Every shop-window that had a French or English inscription had been smashed or papered over. People never passed these without swearing loudly and shaking their fists at them. The war-hysteria was in full force. More than ever I had the impression of being the only sane human being in a crowd of lunatics. And within me, I felt a strong power protecting me against this madness that was in the very air one breathed. Through my own different mentality I was able to feel what the emotions must be in the Entente countries. Sorrow and anger there must be! Joy, too, at a success: we too had taken, or would take, prisoners. Some isolated voices might be raised in hatred—there are evil men everywhere. But that a whole people, with one voice, could utter the cry I had heard in Berlin, that I refuse to believe! Deadly looking, huge grey motors swept along at a mad pace, blowing powerful horns or sirens. Everything had to make place before them immediately: they were military cars. Posters were up, inviting the people out to the Thier-

garten, where they would be shown English and Russian prisoners—*in cages!* Everywhere some new vileness stared one in the face. People often talk about the feeling of being "alone in a crowd." Has any one ever experienced the full atrociousness of it? I did then! I am a Catholic; in despair I entered one of my churches. Here, at least, hatred must remain outside the door. A priest was preaching. Ah no! Hate was *even here!* My unwilling ears heard a sermon such as I hope never to hear again. Hatred was glorified, exalted, encouraged. Not a word of love or mercy was spoken! Nothing but hatred and vengefulness.

A great light seemed to sweep through my brain. Germany would eventually be doomed! doomed because she proclaimed evil her good, and adored Satan instead of Christ. (I had an exactly similar experience in Munich, later on, and when I came here, into a neutral country, I heard Dutch people tell me that they too had fled from German churches, not wishing to hear such blasphemy as was uttered there.) At last those three mortal days in Berlin wore to an end, and I was able to board a train for Munich. I was lucky this

time. My maid and I were able to get into a half-compartment with only another lady in it.

No one has any idea of how communicative people were. They were probably under the impression that at last the tension was over, the bomb had burst, and nothing else mattered. The poor woman we sat with had evidently wept quite recently.

A question as to shutting or opening a window broke the ice, and she told me the following tale: she was an officer's wife; he was slightly wounded, and she had just seen him in Berlin. She was going on to their country place to prepare for his reception. He had been kept in the capital for some report or other, and would join her in a few days.

"Oh, madame," she said, "we all fancy that the war is something splendid, and of course men must fight for their country, but the actual struggle must be terrible. My husband is back from Belgium, and he says he never before regretted being a decently humane fellow, but he did there. He says the way our troops behaved is simply scandalous. And some of the officers were even worse. They killed women and children in cold blood, so as

to be able freely to loot their houses, which they finally burnt down. A good many had gone entirely mad with drink and lust. Many officers were shot down by their own men, and those the best ones. My husband barely escaped." (I suspect that was how he received his wound, though she would not say so. Neither would she tell me where this had happened, as her husband had made her swear never to mention places.) She went on: "He had to shoot down three of his own men who were vilely torturing a girl, a mere child of fourteen, and who refused to let her go when he ordered them to. It must have been ghastly; and we imagined we had the best disciplined army in the world! One cannot but be ashamed, *deeply* ashamed, that such things should have been!"

I gently asked her whether there was no provocation on the part of the Belgian population, as the German papers were overflowing with articles about the so-called "Belgian horrors"—soldiers shot at from the windows, soldiers poisoned, their eyes put out, etc. She looked at me pityingly:

"Madame, do you still believe everything they say in our newspapers? These things

were *invented afterwards—after* our men had committed atrocities beyond words or name; they were invented to motivate, to justify the horrors perpetrated by our men. Because everything cannot be explained away by a lie. Some trace is bound to remain for later generations to see of our passage—a passage written in fire and blood, throughout that unhappy country. No, I am a German woman, and cannot but wish there *were* an excuse. But there was none. The people were simply butchered like lambs (wie Lämmer dahingeschlachtet). As I told you, my husband is a humane man. Well, his wound is less than nothing, but he got a nervous shock, the effects of which he will carry all his life. And they are only giving him a short leave, and then he has to go to the Eastern front."

Poor soul! It must have been terrible to have been so disillusioned in one's own people, one's favourite idol. For, being an officer's wife, of course the army had until then been her idol, as it was that of a thousand others. She again began weeping bitterly. What could I do for her? I felt helpless, and yet very sorry for her. She was terrified, also, at her

husband's being sent to our front. We had been given a nice character, I can tell you! According to the Germans we murdered all our prisoners, and tortured those we allowed to live. Among other things, we were reputed to make them up into teams to drag our guns! In this, at least, I was able to reassure her. As I know our national character (with the exception of a few brutes, who flourish everywhere), we are certainly not cruel by nature. (Witness our Revolution now, as compared to those in other countries.) She felt a little comforted at this, and told me that what I said was borne out by what she heard from her brother, who had been fighting in the East from the beginning. She had thought he only wrote thus to abate her fears. When I heard she had a brother on our front, she became of supreme interest to me. I wanted to ascertain a matter that had daily made me fume and rage, when reading the papers, namely the accusation of cowardice, the affirmation that "the famous Russian courage was a thing of the past."

I put my question to her.

"But, madame," she returned, "surely you never believed *that* nonsense? But just wait

a second: I have a letter from my brother here, and you can read for yourself."

I translate textually: "The creatures fight like demons. I sincerely wish we had them as friends rather than as enemies, for they are rather splendid. They stand as one man, and go on fighting even when badly wounded—I had almost written, when dead." I thanked the lady for her courteous kindness in showing me her letter, and I was inwardly glad that even in this devil-ridden country a few honest souls were still left. *She* seemed a good woman, and her two men sounded honourable and straight, not having divested themselves at the first call of the trumpet of every semblance of humanity, like so many others.

My little lady left me all too soon, having to change to a branch line. I asked her name. She reddened a little:

"Madame, you will perchance see my portrait in some illustrated paper some day, then you will know. But even then I trust you will not give me away. These are evil times in Germany for who dares even to whisper the truth, and you seemed so kind, I let myself go too far. It is not that I

mind for myself so much; but Heaven alone knows what they would do to my husband if they knew what he told me had leaked out! And that I *cannot* risk! Will you shake hands and tell me you forgive me?"

"Of course," I said, extending my hand. And so, even if I knew the lady's name (which I don't), I could never disclose it. She was a nice, honest woman, beyond a doubt, and she trusted me.

During all the time I was talking to her I had seen two gentlemen patrolling up and down the corridor, apparently unable to find places. I noticed, also, that they had American "rosettes" stuck in their button-holes.

When I and my maid remained alone, they knocked at the door, and very politely asked me whether they might "step in." If one of them sat down upon the "strapontin" the compartment could just hold us all. I was entirely delighted! For the first time since what seemed ages, I should be able to talk English, instead of German. What a joy! They came in, and I lost no time in asking them what their feelings were about this war. But, unlike the Germans, they were at first

very cautious. (They had good reason to be, as you will see.) They said, "Madame, that you are no German we can see with half an eye; still, you talked fluently in that language to the lady who has just left. Now you talk equally fluent English to us. Now, what might your nationality be, if we may inquire? On sight we should have guessed English or American. But in the first case you would not be going about freely, and you cannot be the second, on account of your foreign accent."

I showed them my passport.

"Hungarian! How odd! We have never met one before."

Then I told them I was not a good representative of that race, for I took after my mother's family, and she was Russian.

"You don't say so! But then this war must make you feel uncommonly uncomfortable?"

I retorted that it did more than that, for I considered the Entente cause the good one and the German cause the bad one, and officially I was tied to the latter. The change in their faces was as instantaneous as it was brilliant.

"You don't say so? But then we can actually *talk!* This is splendid! You know, we have become rather nervous about airing our opinions; you'll see in a minute why. Upon the day war was declared we were waylaid by a German officer we knew slightly, and we heard a lot about the 'glorious cause,' and the 'thrice-glorious' German army. We ventured a gentle hint about the violation of Belgian neutrality, only to have a lot of explanation hurled at us that did not explain anything. He went on telling us what an altogether wonderful nation the Germans were. Every invention that was ever made was made by *them.* Now, that was a stiff one, as quite a lot of brilliant ones, we consider, stand to the credit of the old Stars and Stripes. Steam! We objected Fulton, only to be promptly told Fulton had stolen—mind you, *stolen* the invention from some unpronounceable old Teuton! The telephone! We dared mention Edison, only to be informed that another worthy Teuton had been robbed of his rights by our Edy! The same old story about radium! M. and Madame Curie had but filched it, before its time, from some poor, innocent, unsuspecting Deutscher!

We began to get sick of this, and to lose our tempers, so I said: 'You know what you *did* invent was gunpowder! I believe it was a German monk, called Berchthold Schwarz, who found it out—by a *mistake*, which blew him *almost* into kingdom-come, where we hope you may soon follow him! Good-bye!'"

I believe I had my first hearty laugh then since the war had started. The story was told with inimitable "verve"—one could not help enjoying it.

"Well," they went on, "the brute probably reported us, because next day, bright and early, we were awakened by a detective and a policeman looking down upon our innocent slumbers. We were told to get up and follow them, 'aber gleich' [but at once], because we were 'English spies.' We said we were neutral, free-born American citizens; we showed our passports, papers, letters addressed to us from home: nothing availed! We were to come 'augenblicklich' [this very instant]. As we were in for it apparently, there was no harm in riling them a bit, first! We fetched some hot water from the bath-room next door (followed there

by one of the Germans, to see we didn't escape in our pyjamas, I suppose); then we calmly began to shave. We were told all this was 'Unsinn,' and a loss of time; we had been told before to come 'sofort' [at once]. We turned looks of wide-eyed wonder upon them. 'Listen, we are American gentlemen, and as such are used to go even to jail clean! Is this not the fashion in Germany?' There was a murmur of 'verdammte englische Spione' [damned English spies], but we were allowed to proceed with our toilet. We made it as long as possible, I can tell you. When I had at last finished, I again moved towards the bath-room. The policeman barred my way: 'Mit-kommen, aber nun schnell' [Come along, but quickly now]. We again looked upon the pair in mild wonder: 'But we want our *bath*.' 'Bad? Wozu? Haben die Herren so lange nicht gebadet?' [Bath? Why? Have the gentlemen not bathed for *such* a long time?] This was intended as a scathing sarcasm, but it rather missed fire when we informed them that Americans, as well as English, were used to bathe *every day*. Were not the Germans? At this they collapsed, growling, and we happily dawdled away more than an hour.

After that we were marched off to quod, their faces like thunder. Our request to be allowed to telephone to our Embassy had of course been refused. Well! a ruder lot we never wish to see! To make a long story short, Gerard hauled us out, provided us with American badges, and here we are. But, you see, we have become a bit careful about airing our views."

My first fairly contented moments since the turmoil had started I passed with these two kindly, cheery boys. They had evidently got hold of other than German news, and they seemed delightfully certain that eventually the game must remain in the hands of the Entente. They were the first to tell me that Lord Kitchener had promised to have an army of one million men ready within the year. They considered Russia, happen what might, practically unbeatable. The money and the sympathy of the United States were freely at our disposal, "as the pro-Germans in America were a dirty lot, and quite in the minority."

All this was lovely to hear, and this chance encounter gave me back a lot of my courage, and really I needed it. Nürnberg being their

goal, my American friends got out. So did we, because we had to change our train.

We got into a tremendously crowded compartment for eight persons this time. There was a factory director from Stuttgart, an aeroplane officer in his oilskins, two Red Cross nurses, and two Bavarian lieutenants, as well as ourselves. Again I was struck by the incredible communicativeness of everybody. The flying officer began the process of fraternization by producing a lot of photos he had taken from his machine. They were views of the coasts of England and Flanders.

The snap-shots were handed round, everybody made some comment, and this started a general conversation. The airman told us about his flight from Kiel, explaining a lot about his machine and how it worked. But as I am an idiot about technical details, I am afraid I cannot repeat this sensibly. What struck me at once was that, once outside Prussia, the very tone of the guard had changed to one more polite and less conceited. The airman was of Danish origin, from Holstein. He said he did not mind reconnoitring work—it was interesting and pretty dangerous. But he hated the idea of having

to drop bombs on cities, a thing that was being planned. He seemed to hope he would not come in for that sort of work, as it was expected the zeppelins would do it. His machine was of the Fokker type. Next the Würtemberger began talking, at first also about machines. Then he told us about the frightful losses the Suabian and Bavarian regiments had sustained, the two lieutenants chiming in. Each of them had tales about relations and close friends killed. It appears that though the families were privately notified, most of the losses were never published officially. The Government was afraid to do so, lest it should "dispirit the people." The real amount, according to them, must have been terrible, especially in the non-Prussian States. The unanimous murmur went up: "The Prussians are saving their skins at *our* expense—*as always!*" They all seemed agreed in this. The nurses, who came from some small place in Bavaria, recounted horrible tales about the ghastly wounds received, and how their poor charges complained about the brutality of their officers, the useless sacrifice of life, and the absolutely callous, merciless indifference generally towards all those who had been

disabled. The two lieutenants, to my surprise, listened meekly, only protesting that it was "more so in Prussia." The refrain was: "Of course one may say nothing, but it is so, all the same!"

The nurses were going to Munich, like myself, to meet a lot of other nurses bound for Vienna. This news surprised me into a question: "Why? Had they not sufficient nurses in Austria?" They all seemed embarrassed, for, upon looking at my passport, the porter had growled out my nationality. I turned to the two nurses, telling them not to mind me, as I had offered myself as a nurse and had been refused because "the profession was overcrowded." (I did this in the first days of the war, in the hope of being allowed to attend the Russian wounded. The hope would never have been realized, as I heard afterwards no ladies were allowed *anywhere near* wounded prisoners.) I was rather staggered by the reply:

"No wonder, madame, that you were refused. You are a decent lady. When the war broke out, the staff of nurses in Austria being insufficient, they took all the volunteers that offered within the first forty-eight hours.

These proved to be all the loose women from Vienna, Budapest, and other big towns. The net result was a bad series of scandals and accidents. The authorities packed these gay birds home, and, unable to supply the shortage at once, applied to Germany for at least two hundred competent war-nurses. That is why we are going," they concluded.

At first I was inclined to doubt this wild story, though corroborated by all my travelling companions. It was evidently common talk. Later on I received the undoubted confirmation of this tale (which I had put down to the animosity of the Germans for Austria) from a high military authority in Munich.

CHAPTER VI

MUNICH

At eight o'clock, after an interminable journey, during which my maid and I had only eaten one piece of bread and a couple of sausages (war size) between us, we arrived exhausted and ravenous at my house in Munich. (There were no more dining-cars on the trains, and the station restaurants were forbidden to sell anything upon the platform to civilians). My housemaid and cook received me in tears. Each had brothers gone to fight, and I could not but pity the poor things. I was informed that my cousins had called me up several times on the telephone. They had grown alarmed because my train was so late.

I talked to them, and was told that the married one had been operated on a few days before and was in the hospital. His wife would call next day, to take me to see him. I went

to bed, busily thinking out a plan of campaign. I would try to sublet my flat, or otherwise come to terms with my landlady. I *could not* stay in Germany any longer. I had lived for ten years in Holland, where I had legions of friends. There I could live my own life, think my own thoughts, feel as I *really* felt. And there I also hoped to be able to change my nationality to what I felt was my true one. Tired as I was, I could not sleep, but got up again, and wandered through my flat. Everything reminded me of my mother and of Russia. Near my bed hung all mamma's icons. The bedroom had once been hers. It was the same in every other room; all I owned had come to me from Russia. And there I weighed the scales of my life truly and justly: my early happiness had come from mother, my early misery from father. Where had I felt at home? In Russia! Where an alien? In Austria! For the Hungarian side of me I had sacrificed my health and my youth—first at court, at my father's bidding; next through my own folly, to my husband. I stood so utterly and completely alone that I could settle my own destiny henceforward

without hurt or harm to any living soul. My only close relatives were upon the Russian side. I felt I must stand upon the same ground as my sister, whose husband must certainly be fighting for Russia. In the German camp I could never be anything better than a suppressed traitor, for my heart was entirely with their enemies. Surely it is always better to be a frank enemy than a false friend. And every pulse in my body desired a German defeat and the victory of the Entente. I *knew* too much about the inner workings of the "glorious German cause" ever to be hoodwinked and talked into acquiescence. I *knew* they were wrong, their enemies right! I had seen everything planned, upon the "Central" side, long before it was expressed in action. Not for me the sudden hysteria of enthusiasm for a cause fundamentally bad. The fault upon the Entente side was merely slackness—lack of foresight and of preparedness. Yet how could *I* ever condemn her—*I*, who had a thousand reasons that ought to have put me on my guard, ought to have warned me? Yet until it was too late I took up the imbecile attitude of the ostrich.

That was a sleepless night for me; but the morning found me resolved.

I was, and still am, sorry to lose the few friends I had in Austria and Germany. First among these were my cousins and Princess Clementine Metternich. She had always stood by me as a true and loyal friend. I have always wished I could talk to her as I talked to my cousins, and tell her the truth. Neither then nor now do I wish to hide behind a tacit lie. That is why I sign my full name to this book, taking the full responsibility for what I have put down. I was sad, too, in thinking of my friends in Hungary. But they, not I, had given up their independent ideals. Let them condemn me: I feel myself truer, more faithful, than they are. They allowed Hungary to be sold into German slavery, whilst my hope, even to-day, is to see her free of it.

Next day I saw my cousin in the hospital. His first words were: "Now, Olga dearest, you must get properly Germanized and give up your fatal Russian sympathies!"

"*That*, my dear friend," I replied, "*never*!"

The women, as before, in the Saverne affair, were by far the most sensible. They understood my feelings, and I told them frankly



COUNT JULIUS ANDRÀSSY (THE FATHER).

I intended to become a Russian. I said that this war had opened my eyes, and I could give no patriotism where I felt none. At first they tried to keep me in Munich, and they were both kind and helpful. They sent me upon one wild-goose chase, in spite of my fighting against it. They insisted that I must go and see the Austro-Hungarian Minister, Baron Vélics, to consult with him about how to correspond with my sister, etc. To please them I gave in and went, much against my better judgment.

I was right in foreseeing that no help would ever come to me from that quarter. What happened was beyond my wildest apprehensions. I was first received by the Baroness, who, poor soul, was wild with anxiety about her boy in the navy. I did not trouble her with my affairs. Then I went to the Baron's office. I began: "As you know, my mother was a Russian, and my sister——"

He interrupted me roughly: "Well, one just *hasn't got* a Russian mother, and when one has that misfortune, one doesn't talk about it—but *denies her, renounces her!*"

I learnt in that minute that one *can* feel a sudden impulse towards murder! It came

to me at that moment. The mean, cowardly, snarling cur before me roused in me the instant desire to kill, annihilate. There he stood, a worthy symbol of Austria! He had been amiable enough, as long as I had had an interesting position and many friends. Now that I stood alone and helpless, he insulted not only me, but, what is far worse, my defenceless dead, even her whom formerly, to ingratiate himself, he never spoke of but as "the beautiful Princess, your dearest mother." He might as well have struck me; it would have been no worse. The red haze slowly receded from my brain as I answered him, with the iciest contempt: "I am *proud* of my mother—make no mistake about it, *very proud.* I always have been, and always shall be! Good-bye; you see me for the last time!" It was my official farewell to more than that particular brute; it was also my "good-bye" to the country he represented. From that minute onwards I was even more open than before towards all my friends. I told them straight out that I was going to Holland to become a Russian.

Indeed, I alarmed a sincere well-wisher of mine, a retired General, to such an extent that

he implored me to keep silent, lest I should come to serious harm. I wish to say as little as I can about these three weeks in Munich. A few people were kind; the majority, even before they knew my views, treated me as a leper. Neither as a so-called ally nor as half a Russian could I expect anything else. A hysterical female damned my mother to my face; some others were scarcely more polite. You see, Austria at that period was disappointing the Germans very bitterly. We had taken Lemberg and were advancing toward Przemysl. My heart rejoiced! But the Germans! They *swore!* The time had come when the fear of the Austrian chargé d'affaires in Berlin was realized—the Germans had to go and help Austria out of her difficulty.

I often heard her abused like a pickpocket. She was alluded to as "A Power puffed up with vain-glory, with nothing to justify this attitude of silly pride." A hard judgment, perhaps, but not devoid of truth. Further, Austria was "unskilful, unpractical, going to pieces altogether."

About the same time, I also got letters from a retired captain in the Austrian navy. These were doleful enough. He was an old friend,

and here are some of his complaints, textually transcribed: "Unfortunately, we have underrated our enemy terribly! We never imagined he would show so much fight, nor have such good guns, nor so much ammunition. Where is the famous disintegration of Russia, upon which they fed our courage for years? It does not impair her fighting capacities, so far. Another, or rather several, disillusions we have had upon our side. I dare not put it more clearly, for fear of the censor!"

To return to the Germans. In their rage against their "dear allies," they again repeated what I had heard before: "What a damned pity we did not, long ago, let Austria take the road to perdition, for which she is so obviously suited! What does this alliance with a corpse [ein eingebildetes Kadaver] bring us in now? If only we had an alliance with Russia instead! Barbarians they may be—all the better, they would not annoy us with pretensions, at least; they would be obedient slaves, easy to rule; and at least they *can* fight!"

I wish to draw your attention to this, you pacifists: in everything I ever heard said in Germany about Russia (when they condescended to find any virtue in us), there was always

the hope of exploiting us as *fighters* some day that predominated. The fixed idea of the Germans was that we had been created to be ultimately ruled over by them. We apparently had *no* other reason for existing at all! Take this fact and digest it, if you can. Perhaps it may open the eyes of the Extremists even as to the value of the German peace propaganda. Those who preach liberty are the very ones to lead the Russian people into a worse sort of slavery than they ever have been bound in before. According to them, we are born slaves (with only a letter's difference, in German, between the words Slavs and slaves).

Russia, always Germany's favourite prey, was now a fresh cause of hatred against England also—England, who had dared to "filch the friendship of Russia from us"—from Germany, who, being her nearest neighbour, should by right have ruled over her supreme! If in England there should still be people who consider the alliance with Russia a mistake, if in Russia there should still be politicians who can consider Germany honest in her wish for peace, let them all listen to me *now*, for I have heard the Teuton in his rage—the only moment when he is honest. And what he

said then, in his Press covertly, in conversations openly, was this: "The combination of England and Russia *must* be broken! *It is the one combination that is too strong for us, that stands in the way of our becoming* THE FIRST *World-Power.* And as long as it lasts, it will always stand in our way. Separately, we can deal with each of them. Together, they make an iron ring that chokes the life out of us. *Therefore, by fair means or by foul, it must be broken.* Even should an evil miracle happen—should we lose this war—we can recuperate in ten years sufficiently *to be ready for another!* If only by that time we have managed to part England and Russia! *Then, at last, we shall be the masters of the world!*" Go, you doubters, and thank the shade of Edward VII, the live Poincaré and Sazonoff, that the Triple Entente exists. And go on, every one of you, giving your best, your most loyal efforts that it *should* go on existing; otherwise . . . But you heard the Germans just now. I quoted them faithfully.

Do not let yourselves be deluded into supposing that the leopard has changed his spots. He has not, he *cannot*! Unless you skin him and give him a different fur. In other words, you

can believe all those on our side who tell you we are fighting not so much the German people as the German régime. It is quite true. So long as the hollow idol of the War-Lord, backed up by his war-machine, does not fall, and does not break into a thousand pieces, just so long are we in danger of "another war in ten years or so." For a governing caste that in the very midst of a war as terrible as the present one is capable of turning its thoughts *to a war to come*, is there any hope of redemption? Must it not be annihilated? I put the question fairly to any man capable of thought. Not later than six weeks ago I unavoidably came across a German officer, once a friend of mine, who has large properties in Holland. He too, to my utmost horror, expounded to me the *theory of the next war*. You can see the danger for yourselves should we ever cease to stand firmly allied together. And let Poland have a care too, lest in *completely* severing herself from us she lands herself in the worst quandary imaginable—German rule! She should be free and reunited—I am the first to say so. But closely allied to us. For Germany's idea as to her future rôle is this: "Poland must remain a card in *our* hand,

to be played against Russia, whenever Russia *should dare to* act independently of us in the future." "Poland is to become a buffer-State between us." A nice look-out for you, my poor Polish brothers! In you lies the German hope of future conflicts!

I culled all this wisdom from the intensive study of German papers and from the hate-filled diatribes of German "leading men."

But I am digressing. Three weeks saw me ready to leave Hunnia—my tearful household dismissed, my furniture stored, the necessary good-byes said. At the last I had a sudden "succès de peur." Almost every person I said farewell to recommended me "not to abuse them [the Germans] in a neutral country." I smiled: "But, according to you, *there is* nothing to abuse, you are so supremely perfect! In that case, what does there remain for me to abuse? Do you by any chance think me dangerously inventive?"

"No, no; but you have a very disconcerting, perverse way of *not wanting* to see what is obvious!"

Again I smiled, repeating: "Obvious, how?"

"Well, it is obvious we are in the right in this war, but you refuse to see it!"

"Tell me," I retorted, "why you introduced a war tax in peace-time, then we can discuss the question further!"

"Oh, that was but a precautionary measure; our enemies would have done the same in a year or two, had we not been beforehand! It is the same with the war. Had we not started it now, they would have been ready, and would have attacked us, in a few years."

I replied: "It seems to me that you condemn yourselves, unwittingly: 'Had *we not started now!*' So you admit it was Germany who started the war." After a violent disclaimer from them, I went on: "No, of course you *don't* admit it—I know that; but it seems to me that *all* your theories are based upon 'what your enemies *would* have done in a number of years to come.' Meanwhile, they *did* nothing, and *you* did a great deal. If your people were not so hypnotized (idiotized would be even a better word), you would in a large measure defeat your own ends in the Press and otherwise, by always mocking and railing at your enemies' unpreparedness. Let me point out to you that upon the self-same page of a newspaper you can read these two statements,

side by side, and they *do not* agree: one is that your enemies attacked you wantonly; next to this you read that they were 'ludicrously unprepared,' 'stupidly taken by surprise.' I suppose your famous German logicians have died so long ago that you forget all about their teachings. I seem to hear their ghosts groaning all over the place, but apparently I am the only one to do so."

I convinced no one, of course, nor did I expect to. I only talked to get them off their subject. I was not to be gagged into silence by any promise. No belated coaxing could avail them *now*.

My poor old friend, the retired General, got more and more anxious about what he called my "ill-timed honesty." He feared to see me dangling from a tree, before long!

It was under the circumstances no easy thing for a woman, absolutely and entirely alone, to undertake this journey (I had dismissed my maid, sending her back to her old mother in Moravia).

From my kind cousins I was truly grieved to part. The one who was well (the artist) took me to the station, and there we saw an ugly sight. A train of wounded Germans

from the front had just arrived, and the unfortunate wretches were marched, *on foot*, through the crowd that had gathered to see them, and that respectfully made way. One man, in particular, seemed to be shot through the stomach, and could scarcely walk, bent in two by his agony, and holding the bandages in their place with his hands. He groaned terribly at every step. He ought to have been upon a stretcher, of course. A military doctor tried to push him along faster; but at this sight even the long-suffering German public began to murmur in anger. The only result of this was that the police, always ready, always present, first ordered and then pushed them off the platform. I was provided with a final and lasting impression of the brutality of the German system generally. And we are astonished that they are unkind to our prisoners? We must understand once and for all that the military system is so all-pervading, and has so far dehumanized them, that they have forgotten how to be decently humane even to their own flesh and blood. I will give you more instances of this as we go on. Both my cousin and myself were shaken with disgust

and pity, but could do nothing. We, too, were pushed away with the rest of the crowd.

The train stood ready to depart. I was hastily recommended to the care of an officer decorated with the Iron Cross (he would have been a wonder had he *not* possessed it), and so, with a last wave of the hand for my cousin, I left Munich behind me.



COUNTESS LEUTRUM.

CHAPTER VII

THE JOURNEY

I WAS lucky to be able to reserve a compartment. This was the first blessed effect of my military passport. The iron-be-crossed one, with a few of his brother-officers, similarly decorated, had the compartment next to me. He came to ask whether he could do anything for me. I do not know how he would have behaved in ordinary circumstances, but before the wonder of a lady with a "Militärpass" he was certainly extremely polite. As it was only about half-past seven, and I could not go to sleep so early, I asked him to sit down and talk to me.

He was a comfortable, stoutish Bavarian, of perhaps twenty-eight or thirty. What was pleasing in him was his derisive attitude as to his Iron Cross. He said that it really had ceased to be a distinction, and he would be

embarrassed to say why he got it at all: "The only decent thing I remember doing was saving a woman and a child out of a burning house near Louvain. My own men had lit the fire, after locking the two unfortunate creatures in. But I got small thanks for this feat, except the blessings of the wretched woman herself."

"But," I exclaimed, astonished, "did you not get your Iron Cross for this occasion?"

"No, madame; indeed not! I got tied to a gun for it!"

"What?" I cried in horror.

"Yes, madame; but do not let us speak of it; *it is dangerous talk!*"

I dared not question him further, so that I remain in ignorance as to what sort of punishment it is to get "tied to a gun." He, too, gave me a lot of information as to the terror the entry of the German army into Belgium must have caused. It appears that the men had shot blindly at everything and everybody—at the civilians, at their officers, and at each other—entirely drunk, with liquor and blood. Some of the officers were as bad as their men, and worse. All this corroborated the tale of the nice little woman I had

travelled with from Berlin. The main points were identical. There exists a sufficiency of books about this subject, reeking of blood and relating unbelievable facts of cruelty. I need not add anything to these. I only mention the fact that I heard even the apparently wildest stories stated by the Belgians corroborated, in shame and in anger, twice, by Germans themselves. It seems to me that this is a matter not without interest. This officer also said, grimly enough, that it did not do to try to be kinder or more merciful "than were the *orders*." It became a question of your own life as against those lives you tried to protect. If you got a name for being "soft," the next accusation was "that you were a coward or a traitor." The next move, after that, was to send you to an exposed part of the front, from which you never returned. Several of his favourite comrades had gone that way. "Softness," once suspected, was rapidly eliminated from the German army! He also told me that the "Feldgrau" uniform had its dangers and disadvantages. It had happened several times that one had destroyed one's own men, mistaking them for the enemy in hazy weather.

He claimed that the enemy had also sustained losses from the same cause.

We also talked about the origin of the war. His opinion was that "it was in the air, anyhow," that it was unavoidable, but had in the last instance been precipitated by Austria. He thought the Austro-German cries of "treason" as absurd as I did. He seemed a good representative of what is commonly called "a sensible man," and I cannot say I found many of this kind in Germany. In his patriotism, he too believed that Germany was predestined to win, and eventually to rule the world. But on other points he was sane enough, and seemed to see things pretty reasonably. Taking everything into consideration, I might call myself fortunate in the choice of a chaperon made by my cousin.

At half-past nine we separated, and I got out my cushions and other paraphernalia for the night. The train had stopped, and I heard "Nürnberg" called. Then we moved on again. I was beginning to divest myself of my outer garments, when I heard a loud staccato knocking at my door. I called out "Wait a second," and resumed my discarded blouse and skirt. Then I opened, and beheld

a sight of misery such as would melt a heart of stone.

A young boy of perhaps twenty stood there—his face drawn and yellow, the colour of old wax, and two bright fever-spots burning upon his wasted cheeks—leaning upon a pair of crutches, evidently scarcely able to stand at all. His right side was bulging with bandages, from the waist downwards. He reeked of iodoform.

"Madame," he said miserably, "unless you take me in and let me sit down a minute, I must pass the night lying in the corridor, for I cannot stand any longer!"

I said: "Come in," of course. And then I asked him for an explanation as to how it *could* happen that a wounded soldier, obviously very ill, should find no seat in a none-too-crowded train.

"Oh, there is room enough," he murmured, "but not in the third class!"

"But what *does* that matter?" I asked, bewildered.

"Madame, you do not know *Germany*, if you ask that. I am the son of people from D——, quite well off. When war was declared, I volunteered at once. From that instant

I became a common soldier, such as I am to-day. As such, I have the right to travel third class *only*. Since I am wounded, I am badly handicapped in a scramble for places. The third class is as full as an egg; soldiers are standing in the compartments and in the passages. I tried the second class. That is full of officers, their wives, and their orderlies. I dragged myself as far as the first class, as you see. Here, many of the compartments are half-empty—three or four officers, with their ladies, in one of them. I asked everywhere if they would at least let me sit down and rest for a while, but they all refused, telling me my place was in the third class, and I was to get there, and quickly at that. As if I ever *could* move quickly again!" he added tearfully. Then he went on: "It was useless to object that the third class was full to overflowing—they told me that was *my* affair, not *theirs*." The poor boy started crying in earnest. Slow, painful tears of despair rolled down his cheeks.

"Never mind," I said, choking; "I have reserved this compartment; nobody can interfere with you here. See, I will give you a cushion and one of my rugs; you can lie down,

and you had better take some aconite, for you feel feverish."

His eyes opened wide in astonishment. "You do not mean that *you*, a *lady*, would not mind passing the night in company with a common soldier, ill, bandaged, and smelling of iodoform? It is not possible! Besides, it would be useless! The conductor is bound to come, and then he will turn me out again, see if he doesn't!"

But I set my lips. "Lie down, and don't talk any more nonsense. I am a match for any 'Schaffner,'[1] believe me; I shall be able to manage him, even if what you say should prove true, which seems to me impossible."

"You will see!" wearily repeated my protégé.

However, after a few more protests, cut short by me, he obediently lay down, evidently sadly embarrassed at my lifting his leg into a comfortable position, arranging his pillow and rug.

Well, the incredible actually happened! The conductor appeared, and, perceiving my charge comfortably extended, yelled at him: "Hinaus! [out with you]; don't you know

[1] Guard.

that the place for a 'Gemeiner' [common soldier] is in the third class! You are the same individual who has pestered all the Herren Offiziere, whining that they should take you in, and now you force yourself in here, to pester this lady! *Hinaus* with you, I say, and fast, or I will lend you legs!" (Beine machen!).

"Schweigen Sie [be silent]," I cried; "cannot you see that this man is ill, badly wounded? If I choose to take him in, it seems to me that it is nobody else's business, considering I reserved this berth. If anything else is necessary to regularize the arrangement, so that *you* should not get into trouble, tell me the difference I must pay towards a first-class ticket for this man. I will pay it willingly."

At first the conductor looked at me flabbergasted. Then he became insolent, as he retorted: "It is true it is none of my business if a lady wishes to 'sleep with' a common soldier, but you cannot pay for his fare first class, as it is entirely against every order and regulation that he should be here at all!"

At this degrading insinuation, I saw my wounded man flush scarlet, trying in vain to

get up: "You see, I *must* go; I cannot expose you to insults by remaining!"

As he could not get up without help, I only answered: "Lie down, and keep quiet!" Then I dived into my handbag for my "Militärpass" and five marks. "Look here," I said to the conductor-brute; "here is a military passport for me, signed by the commander of Munich, and here are five marks. My advice to you is: take the money quietly, and let us hear no more of the matter, for otherwise I will go at once and find the highest military dignitary travelling upon this train, whoever he may be, and report your insulting conduct. At the same time, I will ask for permission to keep this wounded soldier here. Do you understand me?"

I suppose I looked unpleasantly determined, for the brute crumpled up at once, extending a filthy hand for the bribe, murmuring abject excuses as to "only obeying orders."

He went at last, and I proceeded to do what I could for the patient. Then I lay down upon the opposite bench, but, dressed as I was, I didn't hope for much sleep. I lay awake, reflecting upon the unusual situation that made *me*, an alien, play sister of mercy

to a man who had fought and been wounded in "the great German cause." I never had had a high opinion of German mercifulness, but unless it had happened to me personally, as this experience did, I could never have believed their military hierarchy to be so persistently stupid and cruel. Truly, the "supermen" had renounced Christ and His teachings with a vengeance, and with them, the most elementary feelings of humanity. I honestly believe what I have just related *could not* have happened outside the frontiers of the "Fatherland." Discipline? It *is* an enormous strength, no doubt; but I do not believe in strength based merely upon a tyrannical class-prejudice. It is bound to crumble and disappear one day.

Thus I lay, wide awake, philosophizing and staring before me. I was roused by the voice of my wounded soldier: "You are an energetic lady, madame!"

I turned my head: "Why don't you sleep?"

"I am in bad pain. I have just woken up. Do let me talk to you, madame; perhaps I could forget the pain then, for a bit. At least," he added more diffidently, "if you really do not mind talking to a mere 'Gemeiner'?"

First I gave him some medicine again, for I was afraid the fever would return. Then I told him he was once and for all to stop insisting on his being from the ranks, as that was a matter of supreme indifference to me. He was a human being, he was in pain, and as long as I could do anything for him, I was entirely willing to do it.

"I wonder where you come from?" he said, opening widely astonished eyes at me.

"Oh," I replied, smiling, "that is a mixed proposition. My mother was Russian and my father Hungarian."

"Oh! then I suppose you have people fighting on both sides, and that is why you have a heart for everybody?"

"When they are hurt, yes, certainly," was my diplomatic rejoinder.

"War is hell!" he suddenly exclaimed.

"Yes?"

"Yes, madame, unmitigated hell! And the way our soldiers get treated is a disgrace to civilization. I come from the Rhine Provinces. We are used to talk more freely there; we are not quite Prussianized as yet, nor ever shall be, I hope. I can tell you I am *glad* I am so badly wounded; there is no chance of my ever being

forced to fight again. It is cruel, horrid work. I am glad to be out of it for good. We are nothing to our officers but beasts they lead to slaughter (Schlachtvieh)—so many hundred, so many thousand. I have seen men ill with enteric—men so weary and footsore they almost dropped: well, they were driven on as long as they could drag themselves, and then left lying on the road as cold-bloodedly as if they had been bundles of clothes. There is no pity, no humanity, in our army. *None!* I said just now we were no more than beasts led to be slaughtered. It is worse. Nobody thinks of insulting those, at least, whilst you need never wish to hear a choicer selection of oaths than those at the command of one of our officers, 'damned cowardly sow-hound' [verfluchter feiger Sauhund] being the gentlest among them. And they are always ready with a pistol pointed at our heads. Always! And I, for one, know that they lie to us when they say it is even worse in the armies of our enemies. I was present when a French boy was badly hurt, and his officer sprang forward to help him. They were both taken prisoners in consequence. I do not see one of *our* officers doing anything like it. I understand a little French, and the

French officer kept repeating: 'Courage, my poor boy; you will soon be taken good care of.' Well, he wasn't."

"Wasn't what?" I asked.

"Taken care of. He was *finished*, instead. You understand? They were not going to be troubled with one so badly wounded as that."

Horror kept me silent. Then the soldier went on: "Yes, my illusions have certainly gone, for it is not only our enemies we are told to finish off: our *own* men share the same fate when they are too far gone. When I lay wounded, they thought I had fainted from loss of blood, and I heard them deliberating about me. I couldn't move, or speak, or open my eyes—I was held as in a trance; but I could *hear*! What they said was enough to convince any man, I can tell you! Finally, they decided I was young and healthy enough to recover sufficiently to do field work, and they let me live. And here I am. But one does not forget, madame. No!"

What was I to say? The atrocity of what I heard far surpassed my wildest imaginings. A story came back to me then, the truth of which is beyond doubt. It happened to one

of my husband's relations during the war of 1866. Wounded, and knocked senseless by the fall of his horse, at the battle of Königgrätz, this Austrian officer lay in a dead faint. Luckily for him, one of his comrades, in getting killed, fell across him, drenching his tunic in blood. He must have lain so for many hours, for it was evening when he was roused by groans, shrieks, and the sound of voices. He raised himself slightly from under the weight of his fallen friend, and this is what he saw: two German officers, a military doctor, and four soldiers deliberately "finishing" the wounded with their bayonets, and then robbing the dead. Their only response to agonized screams for mercy was: "Unsinn, je mehr von Euch Schweinehunden krepieren, desto besser" ("Nonsense, the more of those pig-hounds die"—the French "crèvent" is a better translation, but has no equivalent, to my knowledge, in English —"the better"). To make a long story short, the man I am talking of only escaped death himself by skilfully "shamming dead." He believed, too, that they were in some hurry, and didn't like to investigate his case too closely, as he was entirely covered with clotted blood. Besides, his purse and watch had been thrown

out by the fall and were lying near him, so perhaps it was not really worth their while.

The world has wondered at the inhuman way in which the Germans fight. Yet we ought to have known. Tales such as I have just told were, up to the beginning of the war, common gossip in Austria. They have not changed through all these centuries, for unbelievable horrors have been verified about them in these our days. Martens spoke the truth when he said one could not change one's national soul. Certainly, the Germans have carried theirs through the ages. The Berserk has remained a Berserk, and to all those still inclined to hold out a friendly hand to them I would say this in warning: There is a deep cleft, a profound soul-difference, between the Teuton and all the other races. That is why he is so entirely lacking in what I call the "psychology of nations." Every other nation can be modified by contact with other races. Each brings a sort of goodwill towards the understanding of those with whom they have to deal. Not so the Germans. Though a certain servileness of nature (or education) makes them assimilate the *outer* form (thus rendering them the more dangerous), and whilst they think it

to their interest to worm themselves into your confidence (even, to serve their own ends, take upon themselves another nationality), yet wherever they are placed they fundamentally *remain* Germans—Germans in all their appalling self-satisfiedness, and obtuseness. Similar things have been said about the English. But *their* outward coldness generally covers a warm and sympathetic heart, if you can but find it. In the Germans it is the reverse: a lot of effusion and outward warmth too often hides a perfectly cold and unfeeling heart. In spite of the Germans' cries of outraged brotherhood, I fail to see any apparent sign of relationship between them. The very manners of the two nations show the fundamental difference I have pointed out. The English loathe outward manifestations of affection, outward sentimentality. The Germans fairly wallow in it. They prove to my entire satisfaction what I have said all my life: that sentimentality is absolutely *no* sign of real feeling or true kindliness of spirit. In a moment of stress, all the painfully acquired outer lacquer of virtues disappears from a German, and leaves him the original barbarian, armed with a club and clad in skins.

His famous "Kultur" covers the widest range between outer polish and almost unbelievable savagery. Not for nothing is Berlin reputed to be the most immoral city in the world. (A saying corroborated by the two Americans I travelled with, who assured me that, provided one *paid*, one could indulge in the most abhorrent and incredible vices, if one so chose, within the German capital.) I myself know this to be true. I can give you a few instances, as they came within my personal experience. The first anecdote only illustrates their tactlessness. The two others are delicate subjects, and you will have to understand "à demi mot."

Everybody who knows Venice will agree with me in this: apart from their everyday religion, the inhabitants have a sort of religious adoration for their beautiful city. Foremost among the edifices especially holy to them stands St. Mark's Cathedral. Even the stranger feels irresistibly drawn towards its almost superhuman beauty. One enters it whenever one can, to fill one's soul with its splendour, and feel happier for it, for awhile. That is just what *we* did, my husband, a friend, and I, upon a glorious June day, when the trains had dis-

gorged their usual number of newly wedded pairs, who were walking up and down the Piazza. One of these couples—Germans—had also found their way into the cathedral. The girl-wife obediently murmured according to Baedeker: "Ach wunderschön!" (Oh wondrous!) The male, who, by the way, neglected even to take his hat off and was, to judge by his erratic-looking costume, an officer in mufti, delivered himself of the following incredible speech: "Ja, ja, eine ganz nette Bouticke!" (Yes, yes, quite a nice little shop!). Our Italian friend unfortunately understood a little German. We caught hold of him, none too soon! He uttered a cry of rage: "Ma lascia mi ammazzare la brutta bestia!" (But let me kill the ugly brute!). The anecdote explains itself. Walking in the streets of Venice, as often as not I overheard Germans remarking upon the dirt, the smells, and concluding that "Berlin was much finer, really, than this overrated place (?), and certainly much tidier." Berlin? that to every beauty-loving spirit must forever stand out among the cities as a monument of parvenu, nouveau-riche tastelessness—and soullessness too!

The second story concerns their art. I went to the Glaspalast in Munich to see an inter-

national exhibition there, in company with a Russian friend. We were nearing the German section for sculpture, when my escort suddenly stopped short, seemingly very embarrassed. "I will let you go in alone," he said; "it might embarrass you considerably if you had to look at what you will find there in the presence of a man."

Now, I am no chicken, and other visits to German exhibitions had prepared me for much. Amongst other things, I still remember a picture called "The Cardinal and the Nun," which I decline to describe. Let it suffice that its subject was hair-raising. However, what I saw now was much worse. In the middle of the room stood the marble representation of two women reclining, *life-sized.* They were scantily draped. The title was "Widows!" The rest I leave to your imaginations. I can only add that, at thirty-three years of age, I fled as if shot, a cry of horror and disgust upon my lips. That unnatural vices should exist is horrible enough, but to flaunt such a thing in life-sized marble, *that* passed my comprehension—passed all that I had hitherto admitted as being possible. I shall always remember a woman's laugh following me derisively as I bolted, and

the mocking cry that accompanied it: "There runs a heroine of offended virtue!" (Da rennt eine entsetzte Tugendheidin). I am not ashamed of it. I ran—ran as fast as I could away from that iniquity! My friend laid his hand on my arm as I joined him again: "Do you realize the fundamental depravity of a nation that can exhibit anything like that openly, shamelessly, without rousing *one* comment in the Press or amongst the general flow of visitors? Do you know the sculptor is herself a woman?" He was one of my best friends, but I could not discuss it with him. I kept silent, and shook my head. He understood, and said no more.

I questioned my artist cousin about how such a hideous depravity could be shown so freely. He only answered that the talent of the lady was undeniable—subjects were a matter of indifference (?).

The third story I will put into a sentence: A man who had had sufficient respect for me, so long as he knew me of independent means, on my becoming almost penniless with the war, proposed buying me. He made no bones at all about it! I think any further comment superfluous.

To return to my journey, however. The poor wounded boy slept and talked fitfully until we arrived, at seven o'clock, in Cologne. There he had to take an exclusively military train back to D——. He thanked me almost tearfully, until I became quite embarrassed. My Iron Cross lieutenant took charge of me again, and we had tea in the railway restaurant. It was there I saw the one and only prisoner I ever saw close by, during all the months of war I passed in Germany. He sat at the table next to ours. He was a young Frenchman, and it struck me that *four* men were guarding him. In his brilliant uniform he could not anyhow have escaped, it seemed to me. Unwittingly, he made me experience one of the most horrid sensations of my life. I would have given worlds to have been able to say a word of cheer and kindness to him in his native tongue, and have told him I was entirely on his side. Perhaps, without being aware of it, I stared at him. I got back such a glance of concentrated hatred and contempt as made my very soul shiver. His inference was clear: I sat with a German officer, on good terms with him apparently, and I talked the language, the very sound of which he must have loathed.

He must have taken me for a German also, and imagined I looked at him out of mere vulgar curiosity. Poor boy, he will never know it, but his look then hurt me like a knife. I was surely feeling lonely and miserable enough, but his eyes seemed to thrust me farther away, into gulfs of solitude and sadness immeasurable.

My escort left me at Cologne. He had to remain there, to become a part of a new formation of troops going back to the front. I was left reflecting on the number of rapid, cinematographic impressions one got and acquaintances one made in these unusual times—acquaintances probably never to meet again this side of eternity.

The rest of my journey, in parts at least, was pure farce. I had two hours to wait until the next train would take me as far as Düsseldorf (it seemed quite a distance in those days). As soon as I was seen not to be under the protection of a uniformed Teuton male any longer, I became the object of distrustful curiosity. I sat near an inner window, with the view on to the station, when I saw a man looking like a station-master, accompanied by another creature in uniform, patrol past me several times. At last the stationmaster came

into the waiting-room and bowed stiffly to me: "Madame, you are evidently no German?"

"No."

"Could I see your passport?"

"Yes." I fished out the required article.

A grunt, then: "Could I see what you have in your toilet-bag?"

Now, this was rather awkward, as I had kept some letters of my sister and of a friend in the English army, and others from another friend in the Italian navy, and they were all in that very bag. What if this should get me into difficulties? True, they dated from before the war and were entirely non-political! However, a dispute was even more certain if I refused, and I still had a trump-card up my sleeve. A spirit of mischief entered into me, as I brandished combs, brushes, and tooth-brushes under the nose of my tormentor. Then I opened my jewel-cases, asking him with owlish solemnity to stand in front of me and the bag, to screen the contents from the passers-by. He consented, never remarking the reflection upon his figure. But, as I had feared, it was solely my blotter that interested him.

"Any letters?" he asked.

"Yes."

Whereupon he said, "Wait a moment," and signed to the man that I had seen walking with him to come in also. When he came, bristling with importance, he ordered: "Show me *all* your letters, madame—*all*, you understand."

What was to be done? I hauled them out.

"From *Russia*, from *Italy*, from *England*," he gasped apoplectically.

"Look here," I said, smiling derisively, "all these were written *before* the war, as you will see if you glance at the dates. Besides—give me credit for so much intelligence—if they contained any dangerous matter I should have destroyed them. I give you my word their contents are entirely private."

This was strictly true, but, as I had expected, he did not believe a word of it, and smacked his thick lips in anticipation of the Iron Cross to be won by laying his hands upon a really dangerous spy! I *did* enjoy myself as he screamed, purple and important: "Ha! you object to my seeing them: hand them over at once: at *once*—you hear?"

"Will you look at *this* first?" I uttered, in a voice of Mosaic meekness; "then I will show you the dates, and nothing else!" Out

came my military passport, which I handed to him.

His jaw fell, his eyes bulged. "You know the military commander of Munich, most gracious Countess?" (I had suddenly become a "most gracious Countess"!).

"I do indeed, very well; he is a friend of mine. But, as I said, I am quite willing to set your soul at rest by showing you the dates of those letters."

I suited the action to the words, but he only murmured: "It is quite unnecessary—quite." And, in fact, he barely glanced at them. The military passport had done it. But presently he espied something else, at the very bottom of my bag. It was a few *German* newspapers I had collected for the amusement and enlightenment of my friends in Holland. The one with the "Fratricide" article in it, another with the "Carthago" idiocy I told you about. Then a few containing the violent championing of the annexation both of Belgium and Holland, because Germany had a right to the mouths of the Rhine and the Scheldt, and the possession of these two "small and unimportant countries" would provide her with an excellent "military basis" against England. Then, too, they were

the possessors of much bigger and much richer colonies than those of which "dastardly England" was robbing Germany. Such colonies were merely "absurd" in the hands of small Powers, but they would be generally beneficent in the hands of Germany. And more to this effect. My papers were confiscated, and in spite of the mellowing effect of the military passport, my inquisitor's voice became stern once more.

"*Why* have you kept these?"

My look of innocence must have bordered upon the idiotic as I replied: "Oh, out of interest for your glorious political aims, of course."

My mischievous soul rejoiced in his discomfiture, but otherwise my infamy availed me nothing. The papers were lost to me. I was asked: "Did you not know that these newspapers are not allowed to be taken into Holland? I will accept the excuse that you erred from ignorance," he ended up majestically.

I could not resist a last question: "But I thought your papers went freely to all neutral countries, *to spread the truth*?" I had ended ironically, with a commonplace of the German Press.

He looked at me doubtfully, then said

curtly: "Not *these*, madame. Excuse us for disturbing you." And then he stalked away, and, alas! my sheaf of "German truths" went with him.

At all events, I was now certain of a fact I had always suspected, that two different copies of their papers were printed, one for their own consumption, one for that of neutrals. Well, I had had my fun, and I was rid of further interference: that was at least so much to the good.

An interminable time seemed to pass before the expected train arrived. I was bundled into a compartment where two hideously smart and unmistakably Prussian officers were already seated. One was a major, the other a lieutenant. They gave me a long and impertinent stare. I sat on stolidly, looking at the tips of my boots.

Suddenly the major bent forward: "Madame you do not look at all German."

By this time I had got used to this inevitable phrase, and hailed it like an old friend. I replied demurely, "No, neither am I."

"Oh! are you perhaps an American?"

"No."

"Then an Englishwoman, married to a German?"

"Neither."

The second man now banteringly interrupted: "Cease bothering the gracious lady, my dear Kamerad. If you knew anything about women, you would have seen that madame was a Pole; she moves like one. Am I not right?" This directly to me.

"No, wrong," I replied shortly. I had travelled alone before in Germany and knew this type of man. It was one best kept upon short rations in the way of amiability. This proceeding generally answered, and one was left in peace at last. But I had reckoned without the change the war had brought about. If an officer was a demigod before, he was a full-grown divinity now.

The major thrust his fat face within a few inches of mine, and said trenchantly: "Pretty, but unamiable; but we have a cure for that. It is war-time, and we have a perfect right to know whose company is thrust upon us. For all we know, you may be a spy."

I was fast getting angry as I replied: "You could, without any preliminaries, have asked for my passport: so far you are in your right, and no further! Here are my papers," as I

handed him my two passports, the civil and the military one.

"Ach, how altogether lovely! [herrlich]; we have the honour to travel with a beautiful ally! Look here, Kamerad!" as he passed my papers on to the younger man.

"Most gracious Countess, you must excuse us," said the major soon afterwards, in more deferential tones; "the times are queer, and ladies of your rank do not generally travel entirely alone."

After having inspected my warrants for existence, the two officers had apparently got rid of their first impression (truly German) that any woman travelling alone was out for a spree, and therefore fair game. But they were talkative, and nothing remained for me but to converse with them, *nolens volens*. They asked me why I was leaving Germany, and why I went to a neutral country instead of returning to my own.

It was best to be truthful, and I replied that I had a married sister in Russia, and as she was the only close relation remaining to me, I did not want altogether to be cut off from her perhaps for years. Derisive laughter followed my words: "*Years*, madame! You are pleased

to joke! You do indeed underrate our forces! Before the winter has seriously begun"—we were in the beginning of October—"we shall have dictated peace to all our enemies."

"I doubt it," was my reply.

"You—you seriously *doubt it?*"

They were evidently thunderstruck by this statement of mine; then: "But you must at least be certain of our victory?"

Again I contradicted: "I am *not*; quite the reverse."

"Madame, excuse us, but you must be strangely ill-informed. Do you never read the papers?"

"I do; but I also *think*, which nobody here ever seems to do."

Consternation was written upon their faces. They evidently considered me a lunatic. "But, Countess, if, as you say, you *think*, you must notice that there are no two ways of looking at it! Just count up all we have done. We have swallowed Belgium like an oyster, the North of France also, and Russia—bah! what real resistance can she ever oppose to our attacks? We are beating her all the time! She has forgotten how to fight, and so we shall soon swallow her up!"

At this my caution was flung to the winds, for I was boiling with rage: "Have a care. Russia is somewhat larger than an oyster; she will stick in your throats and choke you." (I just managed to keep back "I hope," which I was going to add.) "Besides," I went on, "as my brother-in-law and many other members of my family are in the Russian army, you will do well not to say again before me that Russia has forgotten how to fight! Remember Lemberg, and several other places we have taken!"

For the moment they looked angry and discomfited, but then they returned to their horridly jocose manner: "The gracious Countess is evidently a devoted sister; we will not offend her further by telling her unpleasant truths. But remember, Countess, always remember: Germany has a wide throat [eine weite Gurgel] when once she starts swallowing!"

I got really rude at this, and returned: "A big *mouth*, certainly!" (I said: "Ein grosses Maul, gewiss," which is difficult to translate, but it refers to bragging.) I quite expected to be torn to pieces, but to my utter astonishment they roared with laughter instead.

"Madame, you have wit; you should never

be allowed to leave Germany. We want just such women as you, who know how to amuse us!"

"Amuse you?" I said, somewhat mystified; "I assure you, I had no intention of amusing you. And I am most certainly leaving Germany!"

"But, madame, come, be reasonable now! Germany will very soon mean the greater part of Europe. Why fly from us, when we are so *certain* of following you, wherever you go? Listen sensibly to us for a minute. Belgium and a part of France are already ours. The rest soon will be. There will probably be no need for us to attack Holland, where you are going now, for we understand from all we hear that, as soon as the war is over, she will be only too honoured, only too eager, to become a German 'Bundesstaat.'" (I had read as much in their Press!) "So that if you remain in Holland we shall meet again in Holland. Should you visit your sister in Russia, you will also find us there, unless the lady lives too far north—or perhaps is in Siberia! Ha, ha, ha! We have no wish to exterminate the Russian race *entirely*" (how *kind* of them, I thought). "Only they

must be pushed back into Asia, become a frankly Asiatic Power! So, au revoir to you, fair Countess, at the Frau Schwester's, if you should go to what was once Russia! Should you go to England—there will be no England as such to go to, by the way. But what remains of her must become ours too. For it will make an excellent naval basis for our 'blue boys!'"

By this time I had become speechless! No one could successfully cope with such gigantic conceit, with heads swollen to the very size of the globe! And these men were no Press-agents, paid so much a day to inflame the popular imagination. No! they were what, *for Prussia*, passes muster as cultured gentlemen. One was a Baron, the other a "von" something.

Next they referred to an abominable article signed by any amount of German doctors of medicine, which had some weeks before caused immense enthusiasm throughout the country and roused in me an immense disgust. They briefly explained their certainty of victory by medical evidence such as the following: "How can the other Powers compete with us when it is medically proved that three-quarters of France is eaten up, absolutely rotten, with

syphilis; that the English people are just as rotten to the core, owing to the general practice of abominable and unnatural vices?" (For the *Germans* to write such a thing; precisely the Germans! I would recall the Eulenberg case, where the scandal touched the Imperial Throne so nearly that the procedure was never allowed to go on, but was interrupted under the flimsiest of pretexts. Our Italian allies could also furnish us with a good instance, regarding the murder or forced suicide of the late Herr von Krupp in Sicily.) To go on: "And Russia, who might be imagined to be healthy, as she is not civilized at all—*she* is devoured by scorbutus and tuberculosis upon a large scale."

I abbreviate somewhat, but this was the gist of the article, so foul, so disgusting, that I do not know of another country where it would have been allowed to appear in print. A nice, clean way of warfare, the German one—even the one conducted with the pen! Well, the two officers were just going to demonstrate the German right to world-domination as founded upon the principles of this article when, to my unmixed relief, we stopped at Düsseldorf and I got out. Ouf!

Again the distinct impression that in some cases I could kill had made me uneasy. If a wish could have killed, my two companions would have had but short shrift.

In Düsseldorf I was once more inspected, declared not to look German, asked for my papers, and treated with sudden respect upon showing them. Truly I had reason to bless my old friend in Munich! How I should have travelled through the length of Germany unprovided with a military passport Heaven alone knows. I should have been arrested and locked up, without a doubt!

The news the stationmaster gave me was rather appalling. The next train in the direction of Holland was not due for two hours, and it only went as far as Duisburg. But from there there was constant communication with the Dutch frontier, with Elten. Only, this would be the last train going to Duisburg for at least a week, as troops were being transported again to the Western front and travelling for civilians was forbidden. He did not know, either, whether this last train was not already "requisitioned" by the military authorities, which meant, in other words, that I should remain stuck in Düsseldorf for a week, and as

the whole place was crammed with soldiers, it was doubtful whether I could get even one room in the whole of the town. It sounded a nice, promising prospect.

I took some slight refreshment, wrote a letter of thanks to my relations in Munich, sat on, with as much patience as I could muster, in the restaurant, which reeked of stale smoke and beer. The waiting-rooms had been converted into a temporary hospital. After more than three hours of this enjoyable time the stationmaster at last came to tell me the train was signalled, but, as he had feared, it *was* already "requisitioned." I made the rash statement that I would go by it all the same. He smiled in a superior way, saying *that* was entirely out of the question.

I retorted that we should see. I made the solitary porter carry my trunk and travelling case to the platform, sitting upon the former much as Marius sat upon the ruins of Carthage. Only I did my lamenting inwardly. The train dashed in. *Nothing* but soldiers and officers! My heart sank. Suddenly I espied an ancient General getting out of it. He was evidently the "Great Top Chief,"

judging by the salutes and scrapings of everybody, and I made straight for him.

"Excellency," I said, "I have a military passport. It is signed by General V. d. T. If I make no mistake, it recommends me to the protection of the military authorities. You would greatly oblige me by letting me board your train as far as Duisburg."

"Quite irregular, quite irregular! H'm, h'm, let me see!" He carefully inspected my documents, then: "I can take you, as it is only a very short distance; but you are surely encumbered by a lot of luggage, and I cannot take that."

I pointed to my small and solitary trunk: "That is all," I said.

"Not really?"

"Yes, *really*."

He called his Bursche, into whose hand I managed to smuggle two marks. "Johann, do you think we have space enough for the Countess's trunk?"

"Jawohl, Exzellenz; gewiss, Excellenz."

Thank the powers above! It was settled!

But you really ought to have seen the faces of all those who remained upon the platform, my friend the stationmaster included!

Surely Germany was fast going to rack and ruin, once impertinent females thus played fast-and-loose with live Generals and actually were taken upon trains that were "requisitioned." It was terrible! I could not help grinning; it *was* funny! My newly, and thus illegally, acquired General offered me luncheon very politely (there was actually a dining-car). We got on very well. He was originally from Würtemberg, and when I told him it had been one of my late father's posts and I knew Stuttgart very well, conversation ran upon oiled wheels: he knew by my name that my husband's family had also come from Würtemberg, and so we talked families and ancestors. He talked, too, of the year 1870, when he had been on active service. Now he was going to fill some post as military commander in Belgium. The town he was not allowed to name. Nothing of real interest was said, and I thankfully took leave of my protector at Duisburg. It had certainly been the pleasantest bit of my whole journey. From Duisburg on, everything was plain sailing, and I crossed the Dutch frontier at about eight o'clock in the evening.

I shall never forget the absolute *rapture* with

which I heard the first Dutch words spoken, the delight with which I opened a *Dutch* paper and read that the German advance into France was actually as good as stopped, and many other things that made my heart beat joyfully.

I have almost done. In Holland I found all my old friends, as kind as ever, and I breathed freely again. One of my first acts was to go to the Russian Legation, where I was also treated with much kindness and consideration after they had heard my story. I asked for ways and means of changing my nationality, and six months later my ardent patriotism in the Russian cause was rewarded, and I took my oath of allegiance to *your* cause, my brothers and sisters. And I can truly say that no oath will ever be more faithfully kept than mine, both out of conviction and out of a deep and abiding love.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HAGUE

July 11, 1917.

In the preceding pages I have tried to be as just as I *could* be. I have effaced myself as far as I could, without interfering with the complete picture of your enemies I intended to present to you. Do not blame me if I once more assure you that, whatever the faults of your late Government, it certainly did not err on the side of aggressiveness. Since I started writing you have resumed your offensive, and I retract much of my preaching. Yet let it stand, to show you how deeply I feel any sort of unworthy attitude upon your part. *Now*, I am prouder of you than ever.

Let me give you one more word of loving exhortation and advice, one more plea towards unity. I see so clearly myself, having

seen so many sides of so many questions in my varied life. We must all keep before our mental eyes the unbearable horror a German-ruled world would be.

Once more I tell you—I *know*.

A German victory, towards which every single person believing in Mr. Lénin is helping, will mean the glorification and *justification* of war for perhaps another hundred years or more. Preparations for war will flourish as never before. For will not war have brought, to those who had long wished and prepared for it, all and even more than they hoped? The money, the *land*, that should make you a peacefully prosperous country will belong to Germany and to Austria, who, bloated with success, will promptly prepare for further conquest. If you do not help to kill the principle of war, as embodied by the aristocratic and military caste of Germany and Austria, you will but become blind tools for the next war. You will leave the root alive to bear the seed of further conflicts. Do you really harbour the illusion that your enemies will be quite satisfied with having alienated Poland, eaten up the Baltic Provinces, Roumania, Servia, and Montenegro?

Perhaps for the moment. But not for long. L'appétit vient en mangeant. They will presently want all Southern Russia, only to fasten their greedy eyes next upon the Oural and the Caucasus. Why should they ever stop? I ask you. And they will not.

And now, as to the ways and means of counteracting this danger. It only lies, first in fighting as bravely, as unitedly, as you can, when you wish to. Next, you must be, you must remain, powerful as a nation. You have not even to think out a new scheme for yourselves. You need only copy! But copy *well*! Do you not see that any separatist policy will mean that you will become, eventually, a series of small States, each in itself unable to defend itself, whose fate will inevitably be to get "swallowed up like oysters" by Powers long jealous and envious of a great and united Russia?

Surely, to disintegrate would be rank folly! Why not, as I said, copy, and copy well? Have you ever talked to an American, and have you noticed his pride in saying: "I am a free-born American citizen!"? What hinders you from following the road thus indicated, so that your children may say:

"We are citizens of the Great United Slav States"? Give freedom to all the nationalities within your frontiers, by all means, complete Freedom: religious, linguistical, political. Let each State, within *the* State, be as free as it pleases. In America the laws of every State, more or less, are fundamentally different from one another.

Why not so with us? When the constraint ceases, the small differences, the small animosities, cease too, as if by magic.

The mosaic of the American States holds good, cemented by mutual respect and interchange of necessary goods, mental and otherwise. It stands firm, an enormous and powerful unity, made apparently out of the most conflicting material.

What debars us from doing the same? Nothing but our own egotistical smallness and blindness, if we do not eventually come to this conclusion. Surely no State in America feels less important than its neighbour? Nor is it less needful to the whole. The pride of saying "My State is the finest State of all" is surely pardonable, and, in spurring on competition, even laudable. Russia proper, Poland, Finland, Lievland, Esthland, Ukraine,

the Caucasus, let them be independent States as long as they work loyally together towards freedom and prosperity for the united whole. Where is the trouble, if you bind yourselves down all of you faithfully to work towards this end? Take even an individual. When does he (or she) begin to feel strong and inwardly free? When he has blended into a harmonious whole all the conflicting emotions that tear and agitate the human soul. Isolated faults and virtues are generally useless, whilst, united and disciplined, even what was originally a fault can be commuted into good. Kindness without strength is useless, so is intelligence without balance, and thus one could multiply the instances into thousands.

You must try to grasp the problem of your nationalities upon the same principle. That it should be a principle of wide charity and a reciprocal *wish* to love and to understand each other, goes without saying. You Russians proper, for instance, have a lot of passive strength, patience, idealism, kindness, courage. On the other hand, you lack the more assertive virtues: the spirit of enterprise to be found in Poland, that of matter-of-factness in the Baltic Provinces, the Southern brilliance

of the Ukraine, the artistic Eastern sense of beauty of the Caucasus, the unspoilt freshness of Siberia. And they? Will they not need you, in their turn, as much as you need them, to reach perfection? *Together*, you may become a singularly perfect and beautiful whole. Is it not a worthy heritage I propose your leaving to your children, all of you? Cease to think of your own small selves! Think of the coming generation, *you men and women in Russia! Think of your children.*

Do you realize that, keeping together, you are the only nation that can eventually successfully link East and West?

You stand between the two, having the virtues of both. The faults of both too, perhaps! *Yet faults can be corrected and retrieved.* Never forget that supreme consolation. Remain united, and show the future generations a great and wonderful race that you have built up, you men and women of the present day.

Disunited, you can do nothing. But standing loyally together, you can throw back the insult of the Germanic Powers into their vile faces. They contemptuously call you

"Asiats"! Create the new State, the regenerated race, and answer them back: "Ex Oriente Lux!" And you *can* become a Light, to shine upon a century of peace and goodwill, and earn the thanks and the blessing of a renewed world.

I dare to prophesy, for I *know* you to be great at heart, and all is possible to you, my countrymen and women. If you but truly will it, the dream must come true! God bless you and help you on your way; it is not an easy one, I know, but all can be achieved if you keep your faces turned to the coming Light! I have seen it, and can faithfully keep my post and point to it. Look all of you, my beloved brothers and sisters—look towards the rising sun, your sun.

Ex Oriente Lux!

POSTSCRIPTUM

July 30, 1917.

ALAS, that I should have to write it! In a short fortnight we have travelled the long road from glory to disgrace.

Yet I will retract not a word! I will let everything stand as it is written down here. I said that the one consolation in life is that, however late, we can always retrieve our sins and our mistakes. My love for you, O Russia, can never die! But my pride in you—that lies dead, buried under dust and ashes. It shows me how terribly right I was in my agonized warnings and pleadings for discipline and unity.

As a further warning, I will translate an extract from a book that was published two months ago—in Germany in the very period, therefore, when they were trying to bamboozle you with honeyed promises as to a golden peace—*one in all points advantageous*

to you. To understand the full significance of that book having been allowed to see daylight when it did, one must realize that the German censor is so severe, and so much in the hands of the Government, that if he lets such a book appear it must be with the entire approval of the said Government—the approval of all the ideas which that book represents. It may be different in other countries, but I can absolutely vouch for its being so in Germany. I know it all too well.

Once more I repeat: the German Government and the Austrian Government are dishonest, and only wish you an irreparable disaster. Listen, here is my proof:

The title of the book is *The Object of the War in Germany*; the author, one Heinrich Class; the publisher, Lehmann in Munich—*twenty thousand copies* (*in two months*).

"The war has been forced upon us—but Hindenburg *promised us* a victory! Our seeming misfortune is but a blessing in disguise, for it is going to provide Germany with all she has hitherto lacked. We want more land, more raw material, more food-stuffs, and *heaps* more money. The very number of our

enemies guarantees us all this, and more! We shall in future have everything in an overflowing measure. Everybody in Germany whose brain is not entirely addled is against a 'lazy peace' (fauler Friede).

"It is understood by all thinking people, by the great majority also, that we *must* keep Belgium, that has so vilely traduced us." (Here I spare you pages of similar abuse.) "Belgium, *as such, must absolutely cease to exist.* Words are wasted in explanation of this. It speaks for itself. It would be an insult to our other 'Bundesstaaten' were we ever, at the instigation of dreamer-fools, to invest Belgium with such an honour. We conquered her; by right of conquest she is ours. Her King must go, and her people must be allowed *no freedom whatever, political or otherwise.* The Flemish part of the population may in time be allowed to retrieve itself (?), but for the moment it needs an iron hand to keep it within bounds. The idiocy born in the head of other dreamers, that part of Flanders should be given to Holland, only merits contempt.

"France must *once and for all be completely paralysed.* We must take all of that country

that we need, *but without its population.* France may take that, and see how she compensates it. That is *her* affair. This will be our vengeance for the devastation of East Prussia by the Russian hordes.

"England's world-domination must also cease, *once and for all.* Therefore Germany will have an outlet upon the western coast of Europe. Gibraltar, Cyprus, and Egypt must of course be evacuated by the English. What we shall do to Japan depends largely upon our success against England. America will be punished most through her finance. We shall be there to see that it is done properly and thoroughly. *Russia must still the land-hunger of Germany. The Baltic Provinces must be liberated, by annexing them to Germany.* Lithuania will be the land-bridge between us and those liberated (?) provinces. Lievland, Esthland, and Finland must *likewise be annexed,* as well as *the whole of Ukraine.*" (Didn't I *tell* you so?) As to Poland! "Let her not fancy that we have liberated her for love! We did this to give a death-blow to our Russian enemies. *But the safety of the German Empire imperiously demands that Poland should form a part of it!*

"*Servia and Montenegro must be divided between Austria and Bulgaria.*

"Italy will have to change her frontiers in favour of Austria, who will further be *free to punish Italy's treason as fearfully as she likes.*

"Roumania, with all her riches, must *also be divided between Hungary and Bulgaria.*

"Germany is forced by her own miserable circumstances (?) to become not only a World-People, but a World-Power. To attain this, we must further have Tangiers, Bizerta, Damietta, Djibouti, Somaliland, Goa, Ceylon, Labang, Laygon, and San Diego-Suarez.

"In all these enumerations I have not wholly counted up all the remunerations for our Allies. (Oh ?)

"Luxemburg must also be annexed to *us*, to a *greater Germany!*"

The writer is modest, as you see! He leaves me but little to add, except to point out to you that the Germans have *not* changed in these three years, however much they may pretend to have done so. It is practically the same talk I heard in the first months of the war, when I was in Germany.

I give you credit for enough intelligence to

see for yourselves how fraught with danger a Pro-German propaganda (or anti-war propaganda, if you prefer it) is, at the present moment. I guessed right, too, it appears, as to the connection of Mr. Lénin with German gold. If you do not rise, gird your loins, do your duty, fight and conquer the Teuton monster, you will be materially helping to realize the "Pan-German" dream, as set out above. You will help *them* to attain their modest wishes.

Incidentally, you will lose all that *you* have ever wished for: "Land and reasonable comfort."

For Heaven's sake, awaken out of your nightmare, open your eyes, and act. Do not let *Holy Russia* go down to an inglorious, *cowardly death.* Make her rise again, like Phœnix, out of her ashes, to be better and greater than she was before. Wash clean, by deeds of valour and wisdom, the stain made upon her shield by the latest events. Ah, give us all reason, once more, not only to love her, but also to be proud of her!

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